





# THE NEW JAPAN

# BY THE SAME AUTHOR

## POETRY

The Garland of Life

Ode to Truth

Moulted Feathers

The King's Wife (a Drama)

Sea-Change

Surya-Gita (Sun-Songs)

## PROSE

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The Kingdom of Youth

New Ways in English Literature

The Renaissance in India

Footsteps of Freedom

Modern English Poetry

Work and Worship





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THE RAILWAY STATION, TOKYO—PAGE 14

# THE NEW JAPAN

IMPRESSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

(with seventy-four illustrations)

BY

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## DEDICATORY FOREWORD

TO DR. EIKICHI KAMADA

WHEN in 1919 the authorities of the College in India of which I was Principal permitted me to accept the invitation of Keiogijuku University, Tokyo, of which you were President, to act as Professor of English Literature for a time, it was no part of my anticipation that I should write a book on my life in Japan. Neither was it in my dream that two years after my return to India, the work that I should do in Japan's first modern University should justify my being made its first Doctor of Literature—an honour rendered doubly gratifying to me in that its academical compliment is given a vital and national significance in being officially ratified by you in your new office of Minister of Education of Japan.

This juxtaposition of an unanticipated distinction and an unintended book seems to me to be Destiny's indication that you who have given authority to the one should receive the dedication of the other. Distance does not permit my obtaining your formal assent to the logic of Fate. I can only rely on my memory of your

unfailing courtesy, and at least offer my acknowledgment of your great gift.

This book has been written at the request of friends who have perceived from scattered utterances that my short life in your great Motherland, of which you are so distinguished and worthy a server, was more than ordinarily intimate and varied for a foreigner, and who consider that its record may have some interpretative value, and help towards international understanding. Japan, they believe, has suffered from extremes of adulation and condemnation arising from favour or antipathy that were equally remote from reality. My life in Japan set my feet on the middle way of mutually sympathetic intimacy and brotherly frankness and sincerity, on which traces of the footsteps of Truth may be found.

I believe that, without necessarily identifying yourself with any of the opinions of the book, you will accept it for what it means to be, since you, an educationist and publicist of wide travel and long experience, are amongst those whose knowledge of life tells them that where criticism is, as here, innocent of contempt, praise may have an added value in being free from flattery.

*Adyar, Madras*  
March, 1923.

J. H. C.

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*Errata:* Page 89, last line, for 'has' read 'had'.  
 Page 109, footnote, for 'mark' read 'mask'. Page 310, line 13, for 'funeral' read 'funereal'.

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*NOTE: Some of the foregoing illustrations are taken from "Japan" (San Francisco, monthly) and "The Japan Advertiser" (Tokyo, daily), to whose editors thanks are tendered for permission assumed.*

## CHAPTER I

### BETWEEN TWO CIVILISATIONS

WE dropped anchor in Kobé harbour, the central gateway of Japan, at daylight on May 28 (1919) just in time to be too late for the cherry blossoms.

After a dignified delay, interspersed with breakfast and the settling of accounts, the usual official procession in fussy little steamers from the shore began—the doctor and his entourage, the police inspector and his, the passport officer and his. But this time it was different. Heretofore port officialdom had clumped up the gangway with that look of calm efficiency, that sense of carrying 'the white man's burden' in a folder, that meets one at all the British ports from Calcutta to Shanghai. Now there appeared a jauntiness in the official step ; it sprang lightly up the gangway, and shook hands all round with a full-toothed smile. And it was evidently meeting 'civilisation' half way,

for this new officialdom (offspring of the ancient abstemious *samurai* and Buddhism), nattily uniformed, drank intoxicating liquors and ate flesh foods with almost Christian zeal.

It was interesting to stand on the threshold of two civilisations ; one lying behind the range of hills in front of me with clouded and rainbowed possibilities, a civilisation that had stretched its hands towards me out of romance bearing in one a succession of blossoms and in the other a sword with a butterfly on its edge ; the other closing behind me with a brassy bang after twenty-eight days of voyaging with a group of young bloods whose contacts with Asia (on which they based large generalisations to the detriment of the Asiatic) were the brothels, cinematograph theatres and drink-shops of the ports, if their boastings were true.

A line of little men in red caps, dark smocks with a geometrical design on the back, tight trousers and shoes that were really stockings rubber-soled, came smartly up the ladder and stood quietly about the deck. They were the duly authorised removers of passengers and their luggage. They did not tout : they simply waited, and in due time each had his charge assigned to him to see ashore and through

the customs. There was no bargaining, no 'advances,' no surplausages, no noise, no delay, no indignity.

\* \* \*

At eleven o'clock I set foot on the soil of Japan, or, rather, on the stone quayside leading to that bane of all travelling, the customs inspection shed. I had to wait some time, as another arrival had got into trouble with the officers over a piece of machinery. I did not hear the details of the particular offence, but a British fellow-traveller whiled away the time with stories which he told as illustrating 'the commercial astuteness of the Japanese'.

Whether such stories were true or false, they gave me a very sinister glimpse into the dreadful process of working up mental and emotional prejudices which ultimately become convictions, and both colour and create future action. As an observer of human beings from as unprejudiced a point of view as a human being can attain, I filed these stories among my anthropological data with the coldness of the scientist. Nevertheless, I found forming in my mind the idea that along the shores of eastern Asia a new mythology of Japan was being created—not out of the soul of Japan but out of the imaginations of rivals in the game of commercial selfishness

who would not be at all happy if Japan falsified the new mythology.

The inspection of my baggage, when my turn came, took only a moment. I opened a box and displayed a curious assortment of clothing, books, Indian pictures, a plaster-cast from a bas-relief in the ruins of a deserted Indian city (carefully folded in red flannel which might come useful in the season of snow), lantern slides, liquid Indian ink that had broken and oozed through a bundle of letters that I had not been able to attend to in India and hoped to dispose of in Japan, etc. I fancy the customs inspector must have considered this collection the museum of a crank; but I hastily forestalled any false notions by bringing my explanation down to its simplest form: "Professor, Keiogijuku." This settled the matter. He put a mystic mark on all my belongings—and I learned afterwards (as indeed I had happily learned in the Japanese consulate at Singapore) that a University of five thousand students, which annually turns out a regiment of men for service in all departments of Japanese life at home and abroad, is fairly certain to have at least one graduate in every group of five Japanese persons.

I transferred my baggage to the railway for Tokyo, and went by rickshaw in search of certain of my fellow-passengers for whom I had promised to make some enquiries. I found them in the chief hotel, where they had gravitated to the billiard room and within hail of the bar. I bade them good-bye, and left them to their happiness and their Asiatic researches.

As I had some hours to put in before train time, I ordered my rickshaw man to take me anywhere through the city so that I might see what it was like. I was struck with the fact that it all seemed very familiar. Illustrated magazines, moving pictures, lantern slides and picture post-cards have robbed travel of the element of newness. Women with babies on their backs, paper umbrellas, small shops, vertical signs with curious characters, horses with high saddles, these and other features appeared as ordinary as the sights of Dublin which I had not seen for five years. But there are two elements of life that so far have escaped reproduction—‘foreign’ sounds and smells. I ran into the first at the end of my rickshaw drive, and the second came on me later.

The rickshaw man slowed up and put a question across his shoulder :

“ Like see very nice girl ? ”

“ No ! ” I said with emphasis that came out of the memory of things read concerning one side of life in Japan.

He trotted on in his silent rubber-soled socks, his mushroom hat bobbing up and down at my feet. Then he stopped before a building, removed his hat and said :

“ Very nice girl here.”

“ Go on ! ” I shouted at him. He believed me this time, and trotted away. I caught a glimpse, through sliding doors and panels, of a group of gaudily dressed and lavishly painted girls—and had a bad quarter of an hour of thought on the appalling degradation which the Soul of Humanity is suffering because men have set themselves below the beasts of the field who know their seasons of desire. I did not make any generalisations as to the morality of the Japanese, for the preliminary assumption of my rickshaw man with regard to myself made it clear that the patrons of that pathetic sisterhood were not all of their own race. I had yet all to learn about the physical and emotional character of the Japanese, and of its expression in their sex-customs. For the present it was humiliation enough to realise afresh the shattering fact that, the world over, woman is made

the instrument for the gratification of irregular, debased, irresponsible male passion.

My rickshaw ride ended (happily on a note of hope) and landed me at Kobé railway station in a vortex of Japan's young life and in a whirlwind of new sound. I paid the rickshaw man the fare. He received it after the universal manner of the Japanese rickshaw man, standing at his shaft hat in hand—not in sycophancy, but with the symbolical action of respect which all Japan performs from high to low as well as from low to high. Then I entered the vortex, or, rather, two vortices that rapidly transformed themselves into a series of concentric semicircles with me as centre pinned against a wall.

It is the practice in Japanese education to have excursion parties to the seaside and the country for nature-study and general information. Two of these, one of boys, the other of girls, had converged on Kobé railway platform simultaneously with myself. A lonely foreigner was an excellent 'specimen' sent by Providence, and I was accordingly bottled, and scrutinised by a couple of hundred pairs of jet Japanese eyes set in yellowish inexpressive faces. The thought of the queer trajectory of life that had catapulted me

from the midst of farewell addresses, garlands, feasts and incense with which my Indian

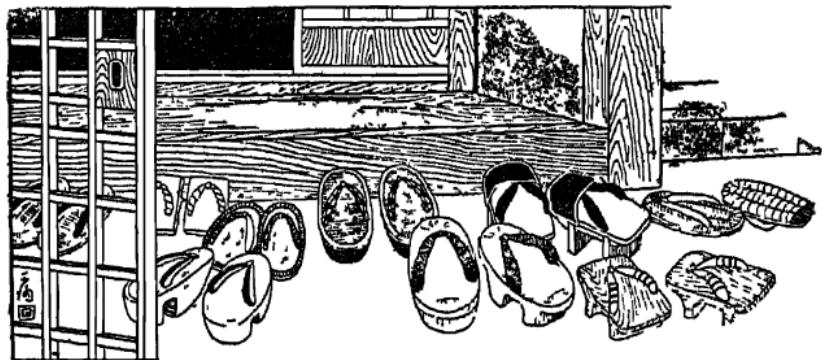
students surrounded my departure from Madras, right into Japanese student life, made me smile. Then the inexpressiveness on the faces of the happy Japanese children broke. My smile seemed to turn epidemic, and in a moment the whole mass of young life was set free. We could say nothing in speech to one another, but the touch of hands made human kinship. Their train time was signalled, and



A JAPANESE SCHOOLBOY

they vanished, and I was left to take in the sensation of a sound entirely new to my ears, the sound of the *geta*, the Japanese wooden foot-wear. To a wooden sole are affixed two wooden cross-pieces which raise the sole from the ground out of the way of the liquid mud or thick dust of the streets and roads of Japan. The *geta* is carried loosely on the foot by a band

between the toes. It does not roll like a boot, but turns rapidly on the front cross-piece. It comes down on the pavement with a sharp, clear click, and where a number of wearers of *geta* trip in their funny stiff-legged way along a railway platform or street, the sound is like that of an army of fairy blacksmiths working feverishly at their anvils. Sometimes a tired or lazy wearer drags his *geta* along the ground, instead of lifting them, and produces a screech that makes a sensitive person feel inclined to do likewise. Socially the *geta* is outcaste: it never sees the inside of a house. Its place is just beyond the doorstep, where it sits in pairs like twin pups patiently awaiting the exit of their master or mistress.



GETA

\* \* \*

Japanese trains are built to Japanese physique. To foreign eyes they look small, and

on the night trains the fundamental smallness is made still smaller by the elaborate appurtenances of the berths, including heavy hangings to secure a quite unnecessary privacy. Once berthed, you feel like a pampered prisoner, and to your prayers add a special petition that nothing will happen to call for a rapid exit.

From my early years I have frequently wondered if I should ever see Fujiyama, the sacred snow-clad peak of Japan. I calculated that the train would pass by it about six the next morning. A Japanese fellow-passenger (with the erring certainty that comes of unobservant familiarity the world over) assured me that we would be far past it when daylight came. At six o'clock I got down from my berth and opened the carriage window—and



"THERE WAS FUJI ITSELF"

there looking straight at me was Fuji itself, a thing of exquisite form, its graceful slopes crowned with snow. What struck me on my

first sight of it was its purity and simplicity. So far was it removed from any standard of size that it looked actually small. One felt as if one could run up to the peak and back if the train would only wait a while ; and yet it was thirty miles away, and rose to a height of 12,365 feet above the level of the sea.

What with dressing and breakfasting I had little time for taking in the country sights that flew across the restricted moving picture of the carriage window. The *Lady of Shallott* had more leisure and space than I ; nevertheless my eye took in rapidly the significance of thatched roofs and mill-wheels, and busy people on land that was evidently made to yield its utmost for human sustenance. There were, however, certain details in the fleeting picture that were beyond my comprehension. Long red-and-black pennants floated (rather wriggled) at the tops of slender poles. Sometimes there was one, sometimes several. Then I saw that they were not flags but fish (cloth, no doubt) into whose open mouths the breeze blew filling out the long body and setting it wriggling. I asked my Japanese fellow-passenger what the creatures meant, and learned that the carp was a symbol of vigour, strength and persistence, and was associated with the annual boys' festival. In

feudal times the festival served as a partial census, as one carp had to be flown for each son in a family. It was, however, abolished in 1873, but the people voluntarily continue the observance with its accompanying ceremonial of exchange of gifts in the form of warrior dolls, food preparations, iris leaves (*shobu*, iris, meaning *contest*), and a feast in honour of the son or sons in the family.

\* \* \*

At Yokohama I expected that Yone Noguchi, the Japanese poet, would meet me. It was through his suggestion that I had been invited to go as Professor of English Literature to the Keiogijuku University of Tokyo. I figured to myself a little man in an artistic *kimono*, his feet in *geta*. There were very few people on the platform, none resembling my idea of Noguchi. After some time my protruding head caught the attention of a young man who came towards me evidently with intent to be of service. He wore a suit of rather rough English clothing and a bowler hat. He was Japanese, I judged by the slightly elongated eyes.

“Are you Cousins?” the stranger asked.

“I am”—and before I could go further he said, “I’m Noguchi”—and climbed into the train. I noticed that his mouth had a sensitiveness

that could flower from no European stem ; and his thin moustache turned so sharply downward at each end that it seemed in some dim way to be an illustration of Shelley's line : "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." I perceived also that my ideas of Japan and the Japanese were undergoing revision ; but my thoughts regarding himself must have glanced off the armour of his unconsciousness, for what to me was a shock of ugly unfitness as to externals was to him the accepted order of the new Japan.

An hour later we arrived at Tokyo railway station, and after depositing my baggage pending further arrangements, proceeded to find an electric street car to the University. From the station we emerged on to a large open space bounded mainly (as a first rough glance seemed to indicate) by wooden hoardings apparently masking building operations. On the left was a very ugly western building which I was told was the Central Post Office. In front was a huge granite structure of seven storeys, evidently business offices, which looked as if it had first thought of being an American sky-scraper, but gave up the attempt, and settled down to a life of flat-faced, square-shouldered, efficient plainness.

"Where is Tokyo?" I asked Noguchi, with an awful prophetic sound in my head as of a dream that was going to be shattered.

"*This* is Tokyo," he replied.

"Yes, no doubt, but railway stations are usually away from the centre of a city. Shall we pass through the centre?"

"This is the centre; this is the heart of the Empire of Japan."



"THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN"

He spoke without colour—just stated the fact. The hinterland of his statement probably contained the buildings of the Japanese Diet, the Imperial Palace, the Imperial Theatre, the Banks and other edifices that, as I found later, were within arrow-flight of where we stood, but were hidden from sight by a rampart of foreign ugliness. The railway station, which I turned to look at, was a not unpleasant

building, but it seemed to me to be out of place, an architectural waif.

“What does it mean?” I asked.

“It is French Renaissance,” said the Japanese poet in English clothes and bowler hat.

“But why French? This is Japan.”

“There are several Japans,” he said—and I began to see light. I felt that my best plan was to watch, with as much silence as I could command.

\* \* \*

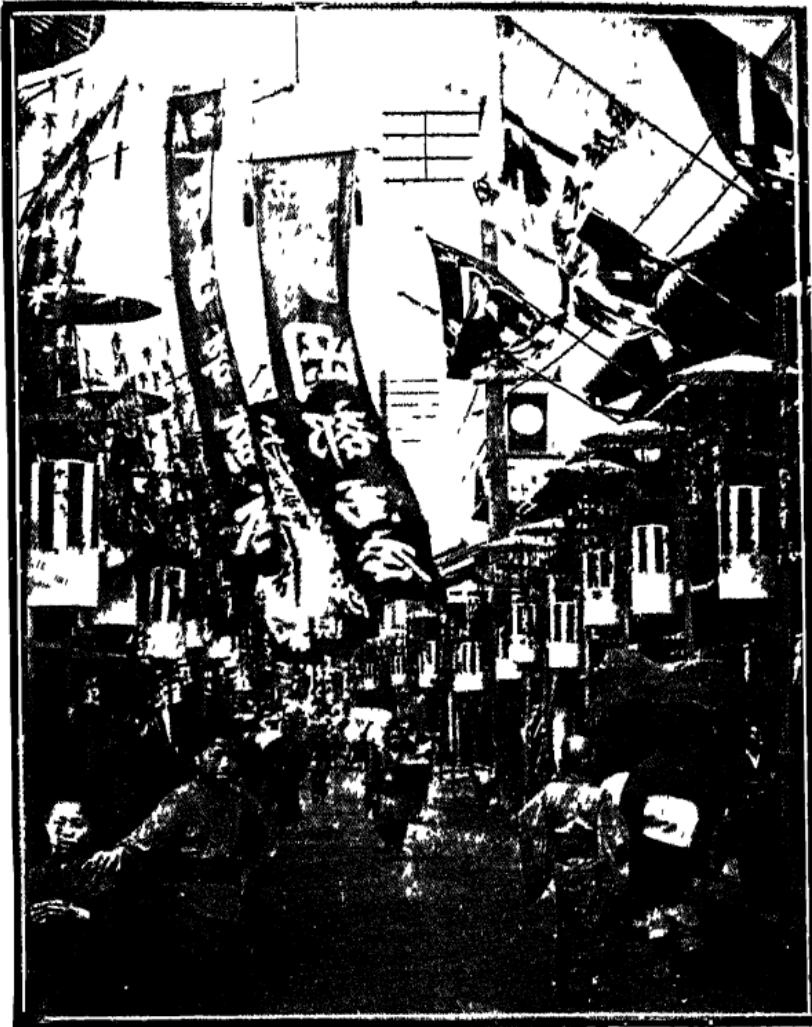
We mixed ourselves into a crowd that was trying to board an already full electric car without waiting for possible exits. Somehow or other we managed to get inside, and I found myself the sole foreigner in a Japanese squash of humanity that was all eyes—eyes that were all focussed on me with a queer bovine kind of stare that ultimately (I learned afterwards) irritates foreigners to the point of wanting to jab a pin into those black beads to see if they would spirt a ray of intelligence or even flinch. I never went that length myself.

Noguchi and I hung on to straps as the car successively leaped like a hound and rolled like a ship in a storm. It went at an appalling speed between the stopping-places; and its stop was as if a sword had suddenly severed the

strained neck of speed. The car stopped, but the passengers went on for a mad instant, and then plumped down on the *status quo*.

There was no chance of conversation. Besides, I did not care to go in for much breathing in the circumstances. I had spent four years in the perpetual open-air life of South India, and was straight from a month on the high seas, and my nose was in a hypercritical state. I was flattened against a lady with a child nearly as big as herself slung on her back. In the mad jerks of the car the mother's head came close to my face. Her hair had been freshly done up in the elaborate *coiffure* of Japan (indescribable by mere man) and was shining and reeking with an oil that my supersensitive nose regarded as having the quintessential stench of fish that had followed Noah's ark, and, when Asia Minor went dry, took refuge in Tokyo Bay.

I sought refuge in my eyes. They told me that, according to non-Japanese standards, the Japanese face is not beautiful—but while I was cogitating the question of standards and conventions in beauty, I made a discovery. By some method of dodging the swinging waves of strap-hangers, the conductor of the tram-car made his way along the car taking the fares. Noguchi had the necessary amount



A STREET IN ANY JAPANESE TOWN



ready, and I noticed that the conductor punched the tickets as if the process were a 'performance,' and handed them over with a delicate flourish in a hand that smote me with its exquisite symmetry and fineness. It was not a masterful hand, not a strong or beautiful hand. It had not the length of finger that goes with idealism, or the length of thumb that speaks of will and initiative. But it had a delicacy and intelligence that seemed to put behind it long centuries of concentration on refined manual activity. I looked around and saw the same hand on men, women and children, and I saw in a flash that when Noguchi, in his "Life," said that the one word which expressed Japan was 'Art,' he really meant artistic handicraft. His own hand, hanging on to its strap, looked as if it could tell the taste of wine or the scent of incense by taking either between its finger and thumb.

\* \* \*

An indication from Noguchi told me we were *there*. We alighted on a long thoroughfare with as many and as typical Japanese shops on both sides as one could wish for. I had more time later for exploring their recesses—with disastrous effects on my purse. Now I just scented Japan in preliminary whiffs—

gorgeous paper umbrellas over dainty women-figures, artistic allsorts in alluring windows, vertical calligraphy on long linen strips attached to sloping bamboo poles, and so on. There were also a number of book-shops well stocked with gaudily covered magazines, and with more sober publications and accessories that indicated the proximity of a seat of learning.

At a break in the row of shops we turned into a broad ascending pathway towards a large iron gate above which a flight of steps led to a hill-top (probably a hundred feet above the street) crowned, as I could see from the level, by a large brick building belonging to the same species as the railway station—non-Japanese. This was the library of Keiogijuku University, with which my life was to become identified for some time to come. The library stood on the right hand side of the hill-top. In the centre was a less ornate brick building towards which Noguchi led me, for here were the offices where I should meet the authorities and some of the staff. And there were other buildings.

It was not until afterwards that I learned how epoch-making a part that small eminence had played in the history of Japan—for here was the hall in which, after the Restoration of 1868, the first public speech was permitted to be

made. The University itself was a monument to the genius of one man, Yukichi Fukuzawa, who pioneered western education into eastern life—with results which (I found) commercial Japan is proud of and æsthetic Japan deplores.

I was received by the President and the Secretary of the University, who gave me an impression of gentleness and courtesy which experience never falsified. Various members of the staff came into the room. Most of them spoke English, though with some difficulty as to vocabulary and accent. The ethnologist in me was interested to note the variety of human types in even so small an assemblage. The “little yellow men” legend took to flight. There was a certain prevalence of sallowness of complexion, but there were complexions of such pink-and-whiteness as would pass without notice in the streets of London—save for the elongated eye that told of the Far East. And there were men of a height that made me feel a pygmy.

Tea was brought in by a young woman, and I had my first taste of the national beverage. Saké (an alcoholic liquid distilled from rice) is a ceremonial drink, and sometimes a disease. Green tea (*O Cha*) is the national harmoniser. “Tea,” says Okakura Kakuzo in ‘The Book of

Tea,' "began as a medicine and grew into a beverage. In China, in the eighth century, it entered the realm of poetry as one of the polite amusements. The fifteenth century saw Japan ennable it into a religion of æstheticism." To me it tasted ugly enough to belong either to medicine or orthodox religion; it had the flavour of nothing save my hazy twenty years' vegetarian memory of red herring. I managed to get a cup down—and found myself, when an hour had passed, looking forward to the next time, for I had a dim appre-



hension of some subtle flavour beyond the red herring stage, and some very delicate

#### • CHA

stimulus that was as the edge of a thin blade of steel to the bludgeoned activity and subsequent reaction of the red tea of my upbringing which somehow began to feel crude and vulgar.

Two things still protrude themselves at me from the memory of those first few minutes of my Japanese assimilation; two things, ordinary in themselves, but made significant by historical association. When Commodore Perry in 1853 knocked with an American accent on the (metaphorical) doors of Japan (and thus not only opened Japan to the world, but, as someone

has said, opened the world to Japan) there was crowding behind him a line of less dramatic figures than his own, men bearing not the sword but various axes to grind, among them the shadowy shapes of the future inflictors of two of the world's greatest crimes against the image of God—horn-rimmed spectacles and gold-crowned teeth. Some of the professors looked as if they had come up from the depths of the ocean of learning and had not had time to remove the goggles of their diving-dress. Others, when they laughed (which they did with an almost disconcerting frequency and heartiness) displayed an amount of glistening gold that would make the after-dinner utterances of the dullest speaker *look* brilliant.

The conversation gyrated around Ireland, India, my voyage, and climate, and then found its practical centre in the question of where I was going to reside. The question was asked *of me*, which struck me as being topsy-turvy. I had come five thousand miles at their kind request, and assumed that Universities which called professors from the ends of the earth had arrangements for their storage. But it was not so. Five thousand undergraduates (the number then on the register) and a hundred and fifty professors is a proposition that has to

be left to its own devices. Hotels? I queried. Too far, too expensive, too full. Noguchi had asked me to stay a few days at his house before taking up my lecturing work. This gave some relief, but something had to be done, and I think I must have conveyed the idea that the action should come from the side of the University. Someone went out, and came back. There was a conversation in Japanese. Then I was asked if I would have any objection to living on the University premises. I was willing to try. A procession was formed to take me to inspect my proposed dwelling. We passed between large, double-storeyed, wooden buildings—class rooms as one could both see and hear. In front was another building of the same family as the library, but with an arched entrance that gave it a touch of special dignity. This, I was told, was the auditorium. The pulpit above the entrance was the place from which Rabindranath Tagore had delivered an address three or four years previously, and had somewhat spoiled matters by delivering a lecture not merely to the crowd but *at* them—which gave me an oblique spy-hole into the psychology of new Japan. Two gigantic pen-nibs, crossed, in stone (the symbol of Keio University) struck me as being a piece of symbolical bathos, an alarming

anti-climax to even the designs on the smocks of the workmen in the streets.

A turn to the left, a passage between a long low wooden building and trees that reminded me of Japanese prints I had seen, and a row of stepping-stones among shrubs and trees, brought the procession to the front of a small single-storey wooden building that seemed to be alone as a building, but in some kind of architectural association with other similar buildings that treated it with respect. The pathway of stepping-stones ended in a large flat boulder as if in an attempt to rise to the dignity of entrance to a habitation of man. From the boulder one stepped on to a wooden platform which, being under the roof, is integral to the house, and is taken into its confidence fully when rain comes or night falls and the sliding glass doors or the wooden shutters are drawn out of their receptacles.

\* \* \*

This was to be my Japanese home. We did not remove our foot-wear, as the room was not in occupation, and would have to be thoroughly overhauled. It had been the tea-room of the President of the University. I could have it if I chose. I chose. Rather, I felt it had chosen me, and that behind our mutual choice was the

directing good luck which has never failed to procure me entrance to the intimacies of the actual life of the countries I have passed through on my life's pilgrimage. Whatever, and however numerous, might be the Japans of Noguchi's arithmetic, here was *Japan*, the Japan of æsthetic sensibility expressed in sliding doors to hidden presses decorated with floral designs, a thickly matted floor, and little white-paper panes through which the light came as a silver radiance with here and there a shadow cast by a tree. Where a 'pane' had been broken by accident, it was repaired by a piece of paper cut in the form of a flower, round, oval or finger-shaped as the break demanded ; so that even damage gave to the genius of Japan only an opportunity for artistic expression. I think it was these sliding paper windows, called *shoji*, that gave me my first Japanese thrill. The idea of paper windows was itself funny ; but they had in addition an atmosphere of purity, something cloistral in their suggestion of closing out the world and closing one in with nothing but an inner radiance. I foresaw for myself unprofessional hours of pellucid solitude. A fish-pond with goldfish gave a touch of I know not what story-book exquisiteness, and there was a promise of a

climax (now hidden) when in the clear air of the autumn I should see the white peak of Fuji from the second stepping-stone from my door.



THE AUTHOR WITH ONE OF HIS JAPANESE STUDENTS OUTSIDE HIS  
PLANK-AND-PAPER ROOM

Part of the buildings that stood respectfully around three sides of the future home of the only residential professor (always the odd man) was

the Club, called by the hearty name of the Hall of a Thousand Welcomes (*Banraisha*). Here (in addition to other things which will duly emerge) the teaching staff of the University took their luncheon; and as the solution of my housing problem coincided with the daily event, I was asked to partake. The meal was, to my surprise and disappointment, entirely western save for green tea as the wash-down. Another of Noguchi's Japans stared me in the mouth, the Japan that had turned its back upon the gentle teaching of the Buddha and had adopted carnivorism in its food. I felt myself, when I declined the flesh-foods, to be the only true Buddhist at the table.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE JAPANESE HOME

NOGUCHI and I returned to the railway station to settle the disposal of my belongings, and from Tokyo station we went by the Electric Railway which circles the city, and at points breaks off at a tangent farther afield, to Higashi-Nakano, a suburban station near which Noguchi lived. Several turns through quiet by-ways brought us to a wooden wall and gate. Noguchi slid aside a small portion of the larger gate, and we passed into a garden which was true sister to the garden at Keio University that I now felt to be mine—grassless, with shrubs and trees, and the universal pathway of stepping-stones, a digression from which to the right took us to Noguchi's hall-door. Mrs. Noguchi was in the hall to meet us, called by the tinkle of a bell on the outer gate. She sat on the polished floor while we took off our shoes. She bowed several times to

the floor. When I stepped on to the platform of the house I also got on my knees and bowed likewise several times to the floor. With Mrs. Noguchi were a young woman (the *nesan*, or servant, as I found), and a girl and boy, about ten and eight years old, if I remember rightly, Noguchi's children. These all joined in the salutations. There was a younger child on the horizon who postponed her acceptance of me pending examination.

The house and its garden formed, roughly speaking, a square, the house occupying two sides of the square. A platform ran along the garden side of the house. The rooms opened by sliding *shoji* off the platform. I was taken to the room farthest from the door. This was Noguchi's study. The front portion of it, which opened on to the garden and stepping-stones, was used for reception purposes. The back portion, which could be isolated by sliding screens, was the poet's sanctum. Ordinarily it was part and parcel of the outer room, but differed from it by having a writing-table and chairs, and a lounge. Both sections of the room had presses and cases filled with the latest works of poets and critics, many being gifts from their authors to the Japanese poet. I observed—and exulted in anticipation.

Mrs. Noguchi brought in tea—a small tea-pot containing the freshly infused green leaf, a



"MRS. NOGUCHI BROUGHT IN TEA"

kettle of hot water, small handleless cups (no saucers), on a dark lacquered tray. This was set on the floor, and we sat around it in a half circle facing the garden.

There was something very fascinating to me in this floor life of Japan. I cannot think how I should have felt towards it if I had passed straight to it from Europe, which suspends its life at an average of two feet from the floor, and reduces the floor to the indignity of a thing merely to be trodden underfoot. To Japan the floor is the natural sitting-place. Any other position is incomplete, in a state of suspension. Hence the invitation to 'take a seat' in train or tram is put from the point of view of the floor—'*Hang* your honourable hinder parts.' I cannot, as I have said, think how I should have felt towards this fundamental Japanese attitude if I had dropped on to it plump from Europe; but four years of life in India, in which I had sat on hard floors for incalculable hours, made me somewhat of a connoisseur by giving me sufficient knowledge to make me a discriminator of subtle differences. The Indian floor is final: you cannot get beyond it; it gazes at you with a wide invitation; yet, when you accept its invitation, it is unresponsive, save for an unspoken sense of security. The Japanese floor is quite different. It makes no specious offer of security in a world of earthquakes, typhoons and conflagrations. Security is the demand of the materialistic, the vulgar, the stick-in-the-mud.

Japan knows that security is a chain on the soul, and she offers instead—repose, the opportunity for pure ease in which the soul may blossom. I know nothing more reposeful than a Japanese floor; but its repose is not that of death, or indifference, or finality; it is the repose of perfect response to each mood or turn of thought as it expresses itself in a movement of the body. The floor spreads itself just a sufficient height from the ground to let you get the flavour of the daily earthquake. Its surface (consisting of matting of woven reeds about two inches thick) is consecrated to cleanliness and quietude, for you are not admitted to the intimacy of the Japanese floor until you have left the world outside with your boots or shoes.

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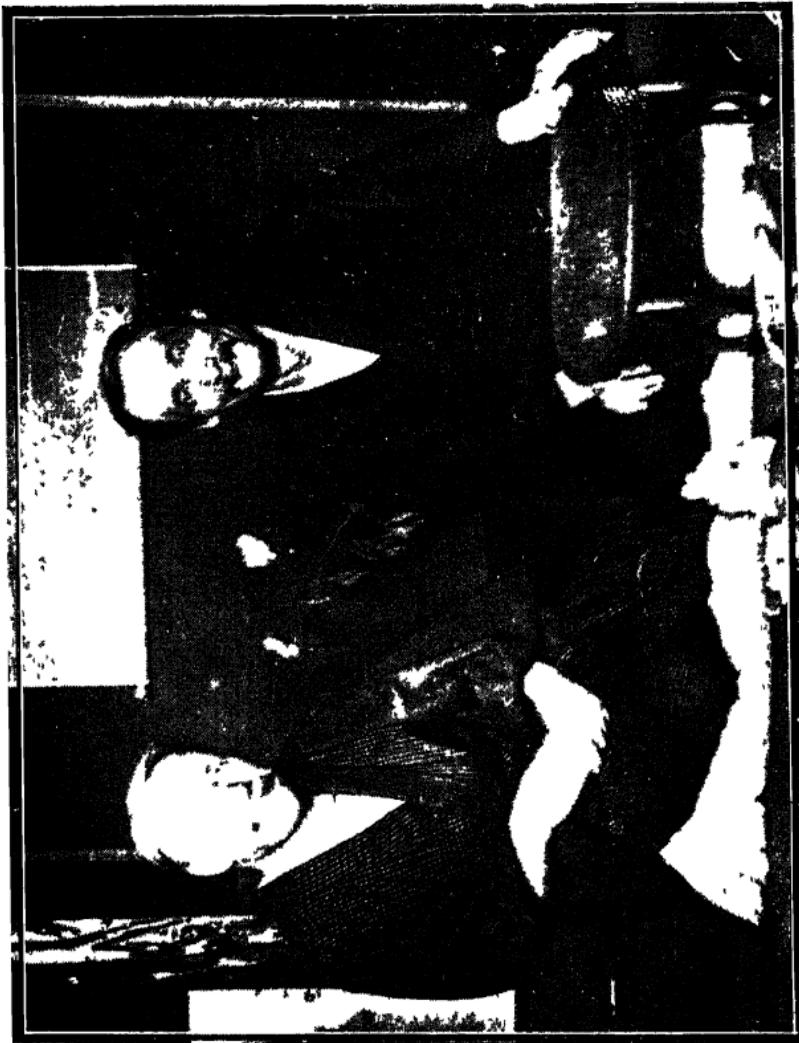
After tea I had a bath—not a Japanese bath: that came later in my life; or, rather, I should say my unsuccessful attempt to have a Japanese bath did. When I had finished, I found the Noguchi of my dreams, a delicate figure in the dark, long-sleeved Japanese wrapper (*kimono*) with a family crest the size of a rupee or florin, and white socks (*tabi*). What was more, I found a *kimono* waiting for myself—the vestment of the first stage of my initiation into the mystery of that gentle thing, the home life of Japan.



KIMONO CRESTS

To don Japan I had to doff a considerable quantity of my western exterior. Then came the second stage of my initiation. The youngest member of the family had evidently arrived at a satisfactory conclusion regarding me in the solemn little mind behind her black jade eyes, and under the hair cut circularly from a centre in the crown; for she approached me without preliminary, offered me a small cake and a cherry, and on her tiny knees put her forehead thrice to the floor. I received her offer of acceptance with all solemnity, returned her salutation, and took my

A JAPANESE POET'S SMILE (RIGHT)—PAGE 36





place in the sacred precinct of childhood's pure friendship.

Noguchi and I talked on the floor until dinner-time, linking up various mutual literary interests.

Dinner was served on the poet's writing-table in anticipation of probable difficulty on my part in adapting myself to Japanese ways, particularly in eating with chopsticks (*hashi*). However, I found no difficulty with the chopsticks. Anyone who wants to know what they are like can take two full-length lead pencils and hold them as if for writing, one lying along the other, the two points level. The lower one rests steadily against the end of the second finger and in the hollow between the thumb and first finger. The upper one is held between the end of the thumb and the end of the first finger, with some space between it and the lower pencil, and is moved to open or close the space at the points for gripping



CHOPSTICKS

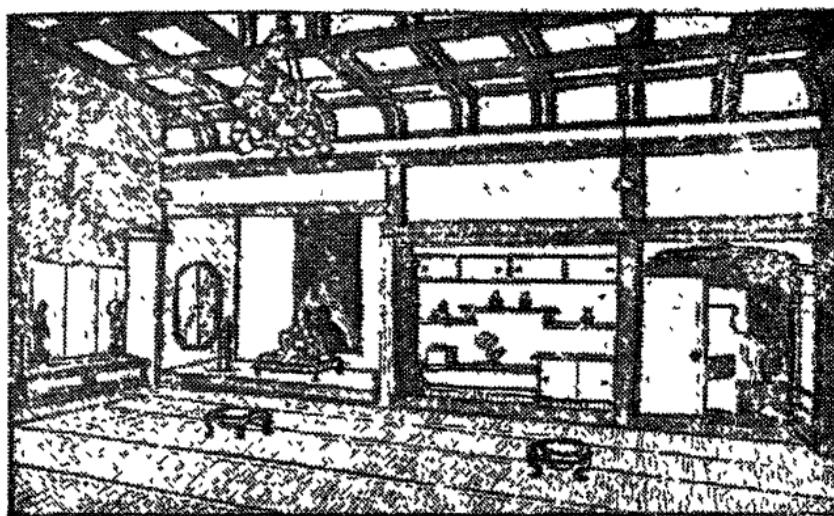
morsels of food and conveying them to the mouth.

The various dishes were served in dainty lacquer bowls. My hostess had prepared the meal in traditional Japanese fashion, but with considerate grace had omitted flesh-foods for my sake, and had substituted samples of Japan's vegetable kingdom.

\* \* \*

After dinner I was introduced to the guest-room, the central room of the Japanese home. Here, save for one picture presented to the poet, was no trace of any influence but the exquisite simplicity of artistic beauty which I was ultimately to realise as the essence of the Japanese genius. The construction of the room, as of the rest of the house, was in unpolished wood, the graining of which was a delight to follow with the eye. Between the guest-room and the poet's study and reception-room was a sliding door of light wooden framework covered with paper on which was a simple floral design. Along the top of the *shoji* in both rooms ran narrow sliding doors for ventilation. These were paper-covered, but, unlike the small panes of the *shoji*, were arranged in a series of parallel strips of wood connected unobtrusively by short vertical pieces, the whole effect being

(by intention) that of floating level mists. The same method was carried out in a circular



A JAPANESE GUEST-ROOM

window of about three feet diameter near the ground which simulated the moon crossed by bars of cloud.

In one corner of the room was a recess in which hung a long Japanese picture (*kakemono*). On the platform of the recess was a vase with a single flower. The wooden post which made the outer edge of the recess was a specially selected bough of a tree, cleaned, but without polish or paint. This recess is called the *toko-noma*. It is the focal point of the æsthetical genius of Japan.

The choicest picture, the choicest piece of craftsmanship, the choicest flower of the season here come together in a beautiful comradeship of nature and art—one picture, one object, one flower on which the attention may be bestowed without jar or distraction.

\* \* \*

While I was taking in the delightful significances of the new life and culture in which I had so happily found myself, one of the other Japans announced itself in the advent of three journalists. My coming to Japan was known from Singapore to Sakhalin (not to mention the Chinese ports) owing to the dreadful efficiency of the newspaper service of the new Japan. These three gentlemen of the press had come to record my first impressions of Japan, and had brought with them the necessary flash-light apparatus for recording my personal appearance. They were almost childishly delighted at finding me in a Japanese garment (*they* were in European clothes), and impressed with the journalistic value of the fact that you don't find a Japanese poet and an Irish poet squatted on the same mat every day. The photograph will stand as a perpetual denial of the allegation that Noguchi cannot smile. Essayists and book reviewers never feel that an article on him

is complete if it does not drag in his mouth and refer to it as the most delicately sad aperture that God has managed to excavate in the universe. The truth is now known.

\* \* \*

My bed was prepared at ten o'clock. On the matted floor of the guest-room (with its resilience as of a green sward to the foot undesecrated with leather) a mattress (*futon*) two inches thick was spread. Over this was spread a similar mattress, thinner, but wider, because the sleeper lies between, and an overlapping on each side is necessary. The pillow was small, and hard, being filled with straw. Around the bed a mosquito net, of small mesh and green colour, was hung on cords from pegs in the four corners of the room. My host and hostess bade me 'good-night' in the Japanese way—with deep bows (hands on knees) and the wish, *O Yasumi nasai* (deign to rest well). When the sliding doors were closed, and the voices of my new friends receded to the family end of the house round the corner by the entrance, and I lay between the *futon* with my head on a pillow that proved surprisingly comfortable, I felt that (but for my silly pyjama suit that I felt inclined to shy over the garden wall, but for various reasons refrained

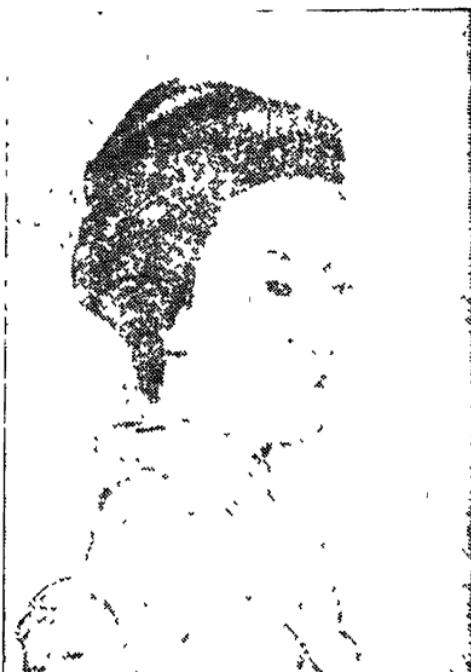
from doing) I had in very truth arrived in Japan.

\* \* \*

The next two days (May 30 and 31) were taken up with excursions into Tokyo and returns to Nakano. Noguchi took me to pay a formal call on the President of the University at his home, where I saw old and new Japan side by side in exquisite bits of Japanese art in a western-furnished room looking out on a Japanese garden. I went to my College room to make a preliminary disposal of my belongings, particularly my books which would be needed for lectures in a few days. While thus engaged I was called to the library to be interviewed by a lady journalist. Her interest, however, was not at all in me (save as the husband of a prominent worker [in the cause of womanhood]), but in the welfare of Irishwomen. She informed me that she was a student of Yeats' poetry, and asked me many questions about him. I enjoyed the rebound from the almost womanless external life of India to being cornered by a woman of the Far East. Japan has her own limitations on the movements of her women, like every other country ; but, compared with Japan, India, as far as its women are concerned, is a vast prison. I was interested to find my

mind discovering for itself certain gradations of feminity in this hundred per cent increase to my feminine acquaintance, Mrs. Noguchi being the first. There was a brightness in the costuming of the lady of the pen which I had not observed in the lady of the home. Fundamentally each wore the same kind of dress—*kimono* bound round the waist by a broad band (*obi*) with an immense bow at the back. The difference was in colour. There was a difference also in complexion. Mrs. Noguchi's was that of nature, uniformly sallow; the lady journalist's was that of art, mainly a coating of white (applied with no idea of concealment) whose centre was, roughly, a special dab on the little nose, and whose circumference was an irregular boundary line round the slender neck.

\* \* \*



THE NEW JOURNALISM

Sunday, June 1, stands out in my diary and memory as the date of my first earthquake. The natural fundamentals of Japan are (as I found in due time) three—volcanoes, earthquakes and conflagrations. Typhoons are extras. They are not native to Japan, but spin disastrously across the slender width of the island empire on their annual wild dance from their birth-place in the Pacific Ocean to their place of burial somewhere along the edge of eastern Asia. But the other three elements in Japanese life are pure native, as certain as they are uncertain, as inescapable as the gaze of the school-children of Tokyo by a foreigner. They form a trinity-in-unity of natural forces that have moulded the daily habits of the people of Japan and shaped the national psychology and attitude to life and death. Volcanic action leads to subsidences in the earth's crust, from which vibrations radiate across the country and under village and city, sometimes as a gentle thrill, sometimes as a catastrophic shake. Buildings are therefore constructed against such happenings, and set lightly on the ground so that though they shake they do not fall. Then come the arctic months of winter with snow-laden roofs and frozen water-taps, with naked fires in houses of wood and paper—and

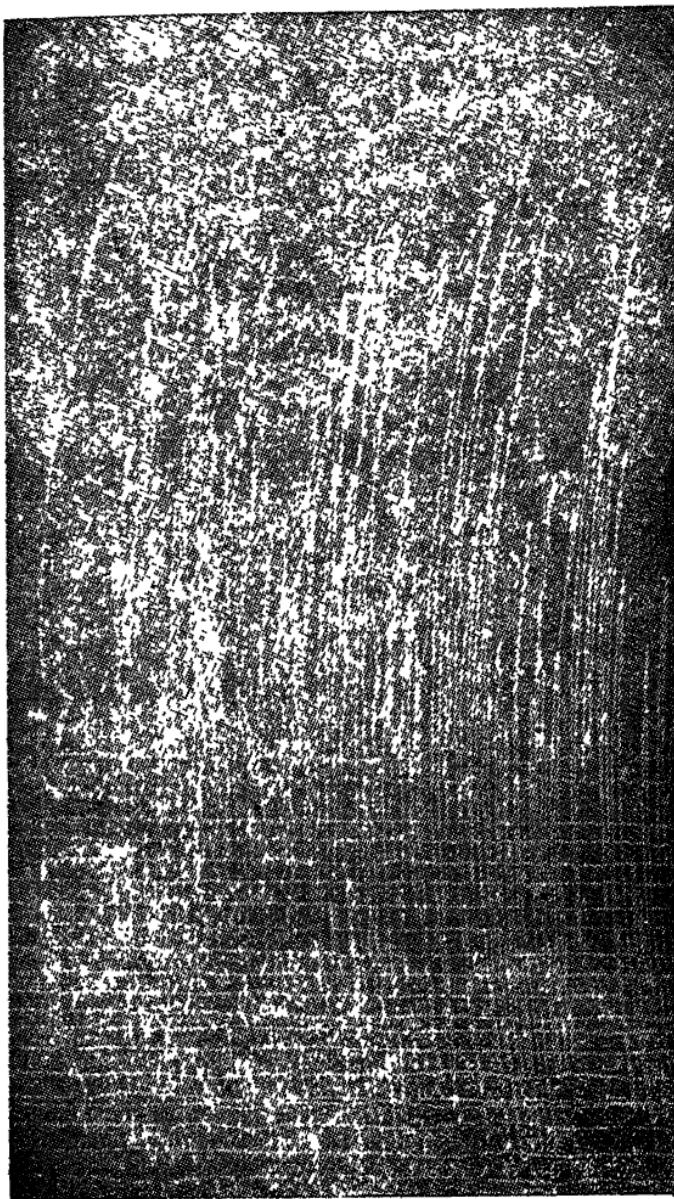
conflagrations break out daily and nightly from November to March. I shall tell of these things in the order of my acquaintance with them. Earthquake came first.

At 8.30 on the morning referred to, Mr. Noguchi and I were sitting on cushions on the matted floor of his study, looking into the fresh greenness of his little garden and talking of literary affairs. His little daughter (who had taken me into her good graces after examination) had run away from us a few minutes previously, and I heard her, as I thought, shaking some part of the house and making the partitions rattle. But the shake grew more emphatic, and increased in a *crescendo* that a musician would envy, until the whole house was rattling. Then I jumped to the knowledge that it was not a child of earth that was playing a prank, but Mother Earth herself showing us that she was not the dull dead mass that some people think she is.

If I had had any doubt that I was in my first earthquake it would have been speedily dispelled by the rhythmic billowy motion of the floor on which I sat. It felt as if it was adjusting itself like an elastic ship's deck to a series of waves that flowed under it in a particular direction. I have no means of describing the size of the

waves, for there was nothing to see, and feeling in such a case can only find expression in figures of speech. The billowy motion reached a climax and then died down ; and the shaking of the house diminished and stopped. After a few seconds there was a short rapid tremour, and all became quiet again.

I have gone through the event in imagination several times in order to try to ascertain how long it took, and the nearest time I can reckon is from twenty to twentyfive seconds. Earthquakes do not give notice of their hour of arrival at a particular place, and they do not wait on mortal attention ; and as I had not consciously met one before, and did not know how to deal with it on a sudden, my recollection is mixed. I seemed chiefly to have been thrown into my ears as if to hear something—not the shaking of the house, which needed no effort to hear, but something deeper like a note of music, felt, though beyond the response of the ear. Strangely enough I felt no alarm. It seemed quite natural for the earth to wriggle its skin if it wanted to. Besides, I seemed in some queer way to know the earthquake already. I had never experienced an earthquake before, but I knew it by its shake. Noguchi assured me that the shock was a specially severe one ; but when we went out a



PROFILE PORTRAIT OF AN EARTHQUAKE

couple of hours later to pay a visit, there were no signs of the event. If the quake had passed under a European city of brick and stone, there would have been something to show for it. But in Tokyo no one spoke of it. It was treated as if non-existent. There were no ruins about. It was very disappointing. To console and convince myself, I get its photograph from the official earthquake department of Japan ; but looking it in the face after a lapse of time, I cannot tell which is top and which bottom—which is, I suppose, the proper mental position in respect of earthquakes.

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## CHAPTER III

### PROBLEMS OF ENVIRONMENT

I TOOK up my abode permanently in my room at the University next morning—June 2. The first symbolical act of my new epoch of single-handed domesticity was the purchasing of a Japanese mattress (*futon*), to make a floor foundation for my bedding which I had brought from India, and four cushions (*zabuton*) to serve as substitutes for chairs. I did not go through the purchasing operation myself, but through the intermediacy of the club staff who installed themselves as retainers with frank pleasure in helping the new *sensei* (professor) who had dropped into the middle of their life and was evidently bent on making himself part of it. There was a curiously delicate fascination in finding myself in the rôle of a new toy to a group of willing and smiling people with whom I could not at that date exchange more than six words of intelligible speech. Arrangements for my food had

been made by Noguchi; but after the departure of the professors and students at four o'clock I was left linguistically helpless. In circumstances like these one realises not only the desirability of a universal language, but also the demands, hitherto unrealised, which one can successfully make on the primal speech of gesture and imitation. Through this means I made known my first wants. A messenger went out to one of the numerous shops on the street in front of the College and brought a merchant with samples. This was where the cook's wife asserted herself. Seated on the floor she put pieces of material together, and selected the stuffing and cover of my mattress and cushions. The finished articles were delivered (and paid for) before bed time.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile I made preparations for taking up my professional duties on the morrow. I had come to Japan as Professor of English Literature. To my surprise I had been asked by the University authority to take a special class in Irish Political History. This request tickled me exceedingly. I was totally unprepared for such work. I had never had any dealings with politics. The sole book having even a remote bearing on the topic which I had brought with

me (and I could not think why I had brought it) was "Labour in Irish History" by James Connolly, who was executed during the rebellion in Dublin, and whom I had known as a fellow-worker for the emancipation of women. With this small volume, and a memory that disclosed a retentiveness of my early reading in Irish history which I never suspected, I gave a set of lectures that greatly interested my students. Later I received another surprise in being asked by the University authority to give a series of lectures on the political situation in India. Here too I was entirely unfurnished in literature save for the small book "India a Nation" by Mrs. Besant—a book then proscribed in India, and used as a University text-book in Japan!

My first official day had an unceremonious beginning. I was to lecture from 9 till 12 to the three undergraduate classes of the University. I went to the professors' room somewhat early, half expecting an official, or perhaps Noguchi, to introduce me to my new students. In this I was mistaken, and somewhat disappointed after the simple and beautiful quarter of an hour of dedication and high aspiration with which the day's work was opened in my College in India. Everyone in my new world had his own work to do, and

went to it without preliminary save a cigarette. I had to find for myself my class room and begin work with a small group of graduation students as if I had taken them a thousand times before. They sat in their desks, quiet, undemonstrative, showing an exterior which I realised afterwards was only a cover to keen sensitivity and passionateness.

The work of my first day was naturally introductory. I learned more from it than the students did from me. I noted the fact that the great majority of the crowds of students who, between lectures, played at throwing ball in the open spaces, or smoked mediocre-smelling cigarettes in the rooms and passages, wore a uniform—a dark suit of coat and trousers, the coat buttoning up round the neck, with brass buttons down the front. With this went an official cap with a glazed peak. The *ensemble* struck me as being that of railway servants in the West. It was dismal and formal, an awful contrast to the white clothing and coloured



scarves of my Indian students. A few wore dark *kimonos* with heavy pleated skirts, and dark soft western hats. The regimental



THE AUTHOR IN HIS JAPANESE HOME



uniform implied boots or shoes ; the *kimono* went with *geta*. Many students wore on coat-collar or in hat a small gold pin bearing the University device of two crossed nibs.

From this date my classes went on without break to the middle of July. I had arrived a month late (owing to difficulty in getting a passage from India) in the first term of the new educational year. I was asked to specialise on modern English poetry, but as to my treatment of it I was given a perfectly free hand.

I was not long at work, however, before I found its limitations, and postponed certain dissertations on literary principles which I had prepared on the voyage. I became uneasily aware of the fact that my lectures were not understood. I tried to evoke response and question, but with little success. I noticed that the spoken English of the students was very elementary. Soon I learned the fact that anything more than a rudimentary knowledge of the English language was considered unnecessary to the study of English literature. This, of course, is undeniable where the study is limited to literary history and a knowledge of the intellectual content of a literature, but it leaves the æsthetical element of literature outside. Afterwards a special request came to me

for two extra lectures a week on English grammar and composition to two large classes on the commercial side of the University. Here I found the knowledge of English quite good. The students were learning a living language for the purposes of daily life.

But there was another and deeper element in the lack of understanding which I felt with regard to my lectures on English literature. I perceived that when we studied a poem that dealt directly with facts or with objects that could be easily visualised (sometimes with the help of a lightning sketch on a blackboard), there was response from the students; but poetry containing an abstract idea, or singing a spiritual experience (Tagore's or AE's poetry, for instance,) found no comprehension. The inevitable comment was (with the head set sideways and a thin smile), "It is *very* difficult". This struck me as an interesting psychological problem. With my Indian students (heirs of long ages of metaphysical disquisition) the temptation was to over-emphasise the abstract element in literature. I perceived that there was a very deep fissure between these two groups of the great Asian family. I recalled my reading of Theosophical writers who classified the Japanese with the "fourth root race" which

had not reached the abstract degree of consciousness, and the Indian peoples with the "fifth root race" whose *dharma* (or cosmic 'job') was to express the higher consciousness in terms of religion, philosophy and social organisation. This was a possible clue to my experience, and I held it in mind until I should have more intimate and extended contact with Japanese culture. Meantime I accepted the linguistic and mental limitations which closed upon my work: I toned down my speech (a tough discipline) and reduced my lectures to simple exposition of the obvious.

\* \* \*

My University work did not remain confined to my classes. Gradually it began to take a wider sweep. There were numerous activities in the College after lecture hours, but naturally they were in Japanese, and I could not participate in them. The twelfth annual meeting of the Keio English-Speaking Society had been held on May 31, and a deputation of students had come to my room to invite me to attend it. But I had then just reached Japan, and was the guest of Noguchi. However, on July 2, when the next monthly meeting of the society came round, I gave the monthly lecture, the subject being, by request, The Irish

Literary Revival. The lecture was in the small lecture hall where, I was told, the first public functions were held a generation ago after the abolition of feudalism. After the lecture, tea was served in the club-room. Everybody was in good humour, airing his best English. The secretary made a speech of thanks to me for what he referred to (in an effort at compliment) as my "unfathomable speech which had filled their go-downs with new knowledge". (Loud laughter and applause.)

The English of the members of the society was very peculiar in pronunciation. There are certain gaps in the vocal gamut of Japan. There is, for example, no *l*. With a nation of ordinary powers and fixed boundaries this would not matter. But Japan is not a nation of ordinary powers or of fixed boundaries geographical or mental. She will attempt, on restricted materials, things that other nations do on a full equipment; she will tackle the assimilation of the pabulum of other nations without a thought as to the completeness or condition of her digestive organs. She takes over the charlatan habit of Europe of calling cigarettes by names that have not the remotest relationship to the article (names that are mere items in the hateful process

of commercial hypnotism), and she calls one brand *Lily*, and puts a picture of the libelled flower on the box,—for a lily, by any other name, could not smell as vile. But *Lily* contains two consonants that do not exist in Japanese. What does that matter? The missing consonant is represented by *r*, and lily becomes *ree-ree*, even as *Lion* tooth-powder (What have lions to do with tooth-powder?) becomes *ra-ee-n* tooth-powder. The Japanese have adopted the plan of supplying milk from special shops; but instead of giving them a Japanese name, they call them 'Milk Hall'. For some time the *mee-ree-koo ho-roo* (in Japanese script) puzzled me. This limitation produced curious results in the recitation of English poetry at the meeting referred to.

On the road to Mandalay,  
Where the flying-fishes play,

became—

On the road to Mandaray,  
Where the frying-fishes pray . . .

—the best thing to do in the circumstances.

In the study of these points my knowledge of the Japanese language and Japanese psychology grew apace. I had possessed myself of a book containing the two systematised scripts (*hiragana* and *katakana*) into which words of

foreign origin are translated, and I was slowly accumulating facility in identifying the elaborate but fascinating Chinese ideographs that I saw on sky-signs and shop-signs. My knowledge of Japanese was also increased by mutual arrangement with Miss Hifumi Noguchi, the ten-year-old daughter of the poet. My week-end programme was shaping itself into Saturday lunch and dinner and a stay-over at the Noguchi home from Saturday night to Sunday night. Part of my diversion was the teaching of rudimentary English to the kind and earnest little lady in return for a similar service to me as to Japanese. The name of my teacher was itself a lesson in Japanese and in the Japanese way of turning ordinary things into things of beauty. The word *hee-foo-mee* is a piece of verbal music; yet it is composed simply of the first syllable of each of the three Japanese numerals (one, two, three)—*hitotsu, futatsu, mitsu*.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, June 4, inaugurated the rainy season. It began late in the evening, and gave the temperature such a fall that I had to shift my bed from the platform between the outer sliding glass doors, and the sliding *shoji* which formed the actual boundary to my room, and

reconstruct it in the middle of my room floor. I was sorry for this, as I should miss the smile of the dawn (wan and vague, as I was cut off from the sun by the big auditorium on one side and tall trees on the other, but still a smile), and the morning whispers and little Japanese curtseys of the trees and shrubs.

I found the first cold very trying, after several years of life in tropical India, but there was no provision against it, as the season for artificial heating was not yet. I was therefore driven out of my room, (and sometimes from my classes which always had a short interval between,) to take short quick walks in order to get up a circulation and some warmth. The rising ground on which the College was situated did not give sufficient scope for the purpose. I had therefore to make sorties by the front gate on to the street, or by the back gate on to quiet lanes, and return the reverse way. This opened up a concentric exploration of my environment, but the climatic conditions forbade the disclosure of its more cheerful aspects. The shops were perpetually seductive with their knacky display of all sorts of artistic things—and I made a resolve that I would know more about them when pay-day came. But the footpaths were so narrow that only two persons could



IN THE RAINY SEASON

pass along them, when rain was falling, by dipping their umbrellas sideways. As I was usually in a hurry for circulation, I could not wait

to adjust my pace to the leisurely toddle of the people, or to stroll in the wake of a gentleman who was entirely unconscious of the existence or possible needs of any other human being than himself, Japanese or otherwise. I therefore found the tram-tracks the freest for my tramp, with frequent side-steps (to let trams pass) into the strip of mud that lay between the tracks and the side-path. At certain corners where busy thoroughfares crossed, the mud was churned by wheels and feet into a paste that bordered on the soup stage. This was inescapable however approached. One had just to go right ahead. I saw now the necessity which brought the *geta* into existence. No other form of foot-wear was possible. The two wooden strips lifted the foot above the omnipresent

mud ; and damage to the toes, on the forward dipping of the foot, was circumvented by a removable leather cover that amused me with its funny incongruous resemblance to a muzzle.

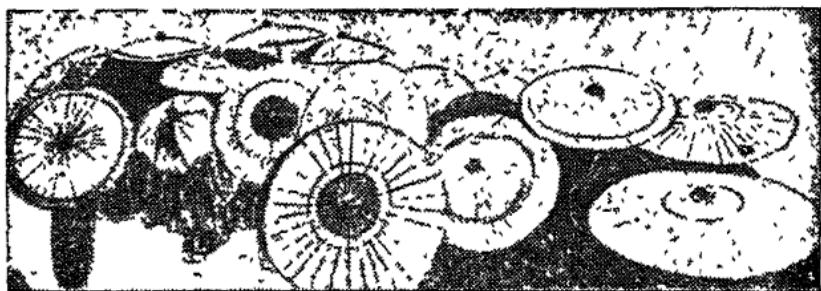
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The limit of these tours in search of warmth was Shiba Park, about twenty minutes' walk from my room. Here I got my first glimpses into the pleasure side of Japanese life. Families strolled about ; parties enjoyed tea in a tea-house by the side of a large lily-pond ; old and young (I among them) watched the contortions of the golden carp and the cumbrous energy of numerous tortoises in pursuit of pieces of broken biscuit thrown into the lake by holiday-makers. On a special piece of ground a long log of timber was mounted horizontally a few feet from the earth. Sturdy young men faced each other in pairs on the narrow footing of the log, and each used the right hand in an attempt to tumble his opponent off the log. The game was almost



IN A TEA-H.

childishly simple, yet it was played with solemn earnestness, and was followed with intense interest by large crowds of spectators, whose oiled-paper umbrellas in a shower made a curiously interesting picture.



PAPER UMBRELLAS

The park is a historical spot, for in it are the tombs of some of the great princes of feudal Japan (*shoguns*). There is also a fine pagoda on one of the small eminences of the park. Looking from these eminences I saw below me a large stretch of the vast capital of this new power in empire—a city of over two million inhabitants. The dull slate-blue ridges of the wooden houses looked like a dark sea bearing the Keiogjuku library like a big galleon laden with the lore of the world. Yet nowhere was there anything that one could point to as challengingly and *naturally* beautiful. The great red lacquered gate to the tombs, with its enormous pillars and sweeping roof, seemed to

hold on to the memory of a Japan that had passed away ; but it suffered the soilure of a new civilisation that sent its electrical wild beasts screeching by at lightning speed every few seconds, scattering the dust of their contempt to collect and coagulate on a work of art that was not merely the entrance to a mausoleum but also itself the monument of a dead era.

\* \* \*

My way to and from the park took me past a police-box—a small hut containing a telephone in charge of a policeman, the centre of an area of watchfulness over the conduct of the people. One day when passing the hut I looked straight at the policeman—and noticed that he did not salute me. Then I got a flash-light glance into my own psychology and into the new life that was around me. I was no longer in India where an arrogant overlordship (now happily passing) had turned a large part of the people into salaaming sycophants. My personal conscience was clear, for such recognition as I had been in the habit of receiving in my country home in India came from friendly association. But I suddenly saw myself as a type of European pride which expected the salutation of the 'native,' and I felt humiliated, not at being

denied the symbol of race superiority (for that dangerous stupidity has been eradicated from my nature for this and all future incarnations), but at the realisation of the degradation of spirit which comes of even living in the midst of the servility that is the sign and accompaniment of external domination. Now I was in a free country (that is, free in the sense that its tyrannies belonged to itself), and in the eye of the policeman was no more important a feature in his landscape (perhaps less) than a Japanese coolie. On the quay-side at Calcutta docks my blood had boiled at seeing a foreign police official assault an Indian policeman for some offence that the lay eye could not see; but in Japan the policeman comes into the circle of respect along with all other members of the community. The raising of the hat or cap is the universal polite precursor of a question; and one day, while revelation was still upon me, I, apparently a member of the race that God has created (according to itself) to "hold dominion over palm and pine," went up to a Japanese policeman and, for my soul's purgation, took off my hat and asked him an entirely unnecessary question.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CULTURE NEW AND OLD

THE sixteenth of June found me in the heart of the newest Japan, the Japan that has given itself body and soul to western music. My relations with my literature students had expanded and deepened. Interchange of ideas brought out the fact (strange and unexpected to me) that western music had almost entirely superseded the indigenous art. There was a large academy of western music in Tokyo. The piano was popular in Japanese homes. A Japanese composer and conductor had achieved fame in America. A Japanese soprano was winning laurels in Europe. I had gone one day by myself to a violin and piano recital in the Imperial Theatre by two Russian musicians —refugees from their country's catastrophe, now finding succour and artistic appreciation almost next door to the offices from which the operations of the war between Japan and Russia had been directed fifteen years before.

In my innocence as to things Japanese I had assumed that the audience would be (as in India) composed of Westerners, with perhaps a few Japanese official impedimenta thrown in. To my surprise I found the big theatre crowded with Japanese of all ages, all intensely interested; and all immensely appreciative—almost too much so, for I noticed that their applause was assigned with equal vigour to both first class and fifth class items. Foreigners were few and far between.

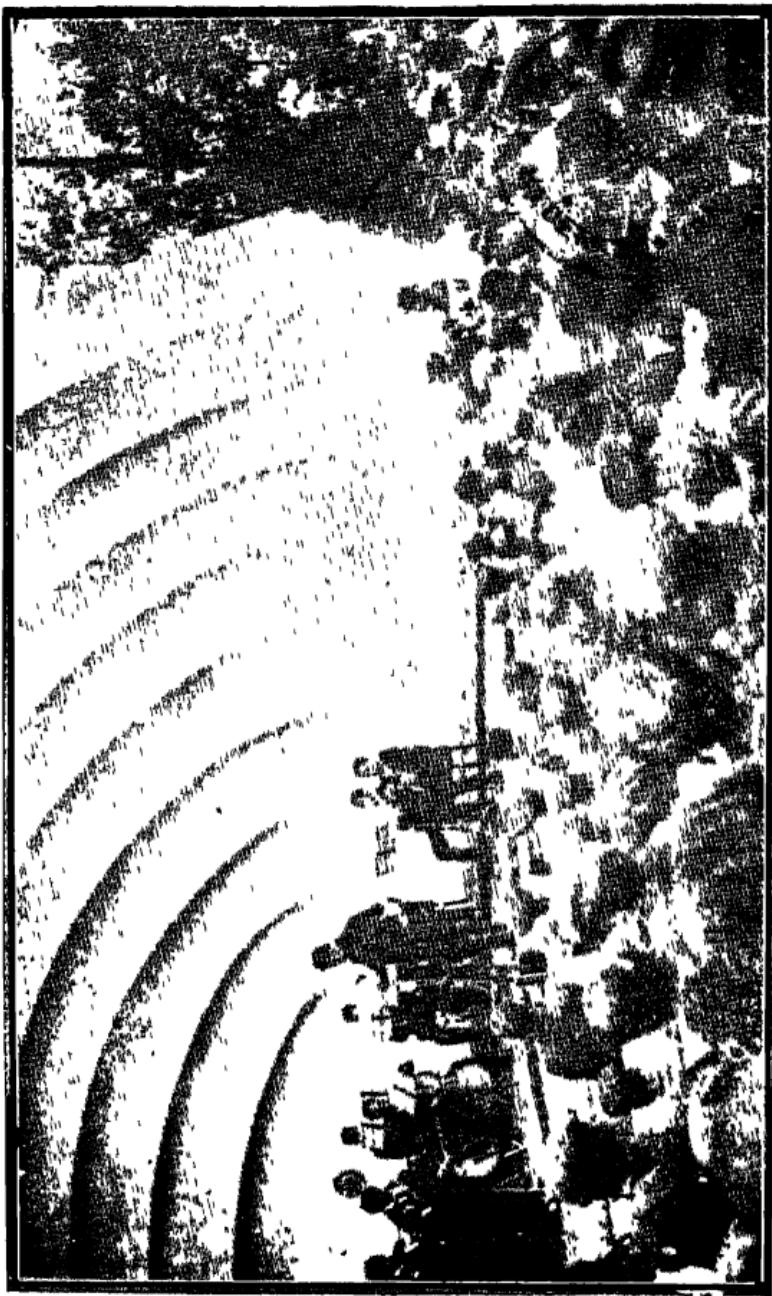
At this performance I was shut off from all understanding of the phenomenon for lack of friendship and speech. I did not see a soul whom I knew; and although I got on smiling terms with a couple of Japanese lady enthusiasts beside me, I dared not break their joy by questions arising out of my own ignorance. But now I was happily in the midst of understanding. I was taken by two of my students to another recital by the same artists, this time in the large hall of the Young Men's Christian Association in the Kanda division of Tokyo. On our way, by tram and train, the anticipation of my friends bubbled into hummed snatches of western songs and opera extracts, with exchange of opinion as to the merits of composers and compositions.

One of my student friends could sing certain operas from beginning to end from the vocal score: the other was studying the piano and western musical science with the intention of becoming a musical critic, an ambition which has since carried him to London.

In response to my desire that they should let me into the heart of their enthusiasm, they took me to the gallery of the hall, where I sat with a great crowd of students, including ladies. Before the performance and during the intervals I made many friends, and was inwardly amused to find that several of the young men introduced one another as "very famous" poets. I came in for my share of the encouraging adjective, and we were all very happy in mutual enthusiasm not so much over our personal fame as over the impersonal pursuit of poetry and music that bound us in an association of joy and youth—though my total of years was twice any of theirs. The items were listened to with a concentration equal to that of any musical western audience at a choice recital. There was perfect silence. Many sat with closed eyes. Others leaned forward intently watching the performers. At the end of each item there was an outburst of applause and a buzz of comment. Some made notes on their

programmes. During the long interval I mixed with the audience in the corridor and discussed the programme and musical matters in general with such of them as knew English. I was struck by their acumen and their detailed knowledge of western composers and their works.

I gathered that this recent development of enthusiasm for western music was not so much a renunciation of the indigenous music as the annexation of a larger means of expression for an expanding national consciousness. The instruments and methods of Japanese music are restricted and do not appear to offer scope for development; though, as a believer in the duty of every country to achieve the utmost expression of its own culture, I harbour a secret hope that the study of western music will move some Japanese musician to turn his attention to his country's own voice. In the meantime there is no use denying the musical conquest of Japan by Europe and America. What the outcome will be it is not easy to prognosticate. Japan is not only listening to foreign musicians, but is playing, singing and composing in the western modes. At present she is moving well within the circumference of western musical evolution, enjoying what has become somewhat stale to western ears. She is *following*



AN OPEN-AIR BAND-STAND



western music; while western music is only truly itself when it is running away from itself into new modes of expression—the next of which is practically certain to be derived from the East!

The hall in which the concert was held might have been a public hall in any English or Irish town. But there was one item, apart from the human element, which could only have been in Japan—that was the platform programme. Japanese writing (or printing) is read from top to bottom. It is brush-ed rapidly on to paper with Indian ink. Each item of the programme was thus displayed in large characters on a strip about five feet long hung on a slender wooden post with a square base. As item succeeded item the long strip was turned over displaying the next. I asked one of my student friends if it would be possible for me



to get one of these strips when they were finished with. When we were leaving the hall this student handed me the entire programme ! Item 4 is reproduced on page 65.

\* \* \*

Thursday, June 19, opened another door for me into the real Japan. During the day a deputation of students called at my room, and with bared heads and many low bows (the ritual of politeness in general, not of any respect in particular) invited me, 'as a poet,' to be present at the meeting of the Short Poem (*tanka*) Society of the University at nine o'clock in the evening. Meanwhile I gathered some information as to what this particular society stood for—and found myself, to my delight, at the very heart of Japanese civilisation.

The Japanese language is syllabic ; that is to say, every consonant, with one exception, has a vowel following it. These vowels are five in number, ah, ee, oo, eh, oh ; hence the possibilities of similarities and variations at the ends of lines, which go to the making of rhyme in English poetry, are very limited in Japanese. Its poetry has therefore developed along quite different lines from English poetry. Its excellences lie in rhythm, in the musical association of syllables, in choice of words,

in beauty of mental picture, and in æsthetic idea.

This limitation on the physical side, so to speak, of Japanese poetry has its effect in a mental limitation. The expression of psychology and character, the sense of power and distinctive individuality, that we get in English poetry, are absent from Japanese poetry. Its excellences are mainly excellences of form ; and as form is a matter in which expertness comes with constant practice, the writing of poetry in Japan is not regarded either as an unpractical foolishness or as an aberration of genius. It is a universal accomplishment. Children practise it at school. Hundreds of young men and women all over the country enter for the annual *tanka* (short poem) competition the subject of which is given by the Emperor. One year it is "Early Plum Blossoms". Another year it is about a pine-tree ; another, Fujiyama. Always it is some feature of nature treated æsthetically. For generations the Japanese mind has worked within these limitations, and has produced a perfect art; a small art, an art undisturbed by that erratic thing called the abstract mind which cannot content itself with perfect littleness, but roams about seeking holes in its cage through which to escape into larger worlds of adventure.

There are signs that that disturber of the artistic peace is beginning to work in the minds of the young Japanese poets. The wave of westernisation has carried into Japan the songs of the new Frenchmen and the Irish Renaissance. The young writers speak largely of "the coming renaissance in Japanese poetry".

Until that renaissance is some years old, and has justified itself artistically, it has to be recorded that Japanese poetry consists chiefly, though not exclusively, of short poems divided into two classes, the *hokku* or seventeen syllable poem of three lines, the first line of five syllables, the second of seven, the third of five ; and the *tanka* or *uta*, a poem of thirty-one syllables in lines of five, seven, five, seven, seven syllables. Here is the translation of a famous *hokku*.

Old temple.

Bell voiceless.

Cherry blossoms fall !

It sounds very simple. Anybody could do it, we fancy. Yet it took a special man to be born to throw together the emotional significance of a silent bell in an old temple and the falling of the cherry flowers. Its effectiveness is not in the accomplishment of utterance of a great idea, but in the use of a universally known method for making a suggestion that will have

an æsthetic response in the mind of a Japanese reader. In western poetry, surprise is sought for in surprising ways. The Japanese seek for surprise in familiar ways. This limits the art on its technical side, and reduces what Westerners call originality; but it has its compensations; it makes the intended pleasure more accessible. We have not to dig or soar for it; it is "right there" as the Americans say—but, in order to get that pleasure, you have to accept the artistic limitations, and not grumble because you know what is coming. A Japanese would no more worry over the sameness of method in a particular class of poem than over the sameness of pine-trees. He (or she, for there is no sex-distinction in Japanese poetry) would take the form for granted, and pass on to the enjoyment of whatever in the final effect was beautiful or even familiar. The method does not, as I have already indicated, make for variety or largeness, but it makes for a limited perfection in the long run, and for a wider sharing of æsthetic pleasure without any severe intellectual or imaginative strain. It therefore has its place; and it is not impossible that the fineness of taste thus developed may lift poetry to a higher round of its spiral of evolution when "the coming renaissance"

lets it loose into freer and more extensive forms.

When I joined the *tanka* party in the University club-room they were in the throes of poetry composition. The competitors (that is to say, all present, which included several ladies) were kneeling in the customary floor posture along the sides of the room behind a row of small tables which in Europe would only receive the honour due to stools. The subject for composition had been brushed on an eighteen inch perpendicular strip of white paper which was pinned to one of the unpolished wooden beams in the ceiling of the room. I sat (cross-legged in the Indian fashion by permission instead of the Japanese way on the knees) near the president, a distinguished poet who had come to act as judge on the occasion. While the composition of the *tanka* was proceeding, some of the members, who had finished their pieces and handed them to the judge, talked with me on the subject of poetry, and endeavoured (very successfully) to make me feel that I was one in spirit with them though shut out by difference of speech from participation in their æsthetic joy. It was indeed very strange to sit there with an assembly of complete strangers (all, to my delight, in their national costume) and yet

to feel that, through written characters that were incomprehensible to me, the same spirit of Poetry as had at times stirred within myself was here finding expression. On my entrance they had all bowed towards me, and, as one after another finished his or her poem, and was free in mind, they bowed individually with a silent signification of—"We are one in our devotion to song." It was good to realise that in the disinterested service of art we could mingle in spirit with no taint of self-seeking save the forgivable desire "to say our inmost in the sweetest way" (as Meredith puts it) and to give (or, it may happily be, take) recognition for a worthy thing worthily done. Several of the poets left their places and came to me with small plain fans on which they requested me to write a short poem of my own and to sign it as a souvenir of an occasion that was as happy to me as they said it was to them. When all the competing *tanka* were handed in, the judge arranged them in what he considered their order of merit. Then he read them—or, rather, chanted them one by one. No author's name was put to the *tanka*; but as each was read, and greeted with applause or laughter according as its execution was solemn or humorous, its author had to own himself or

herself by a bow and receive the salutations of the others. The order of merit was entered in a formidable book, and I was told that at the end of the year there would be a final list compiled from the results of the year's competitions, and the poet who headed the list would be hailed as a poetical hero.

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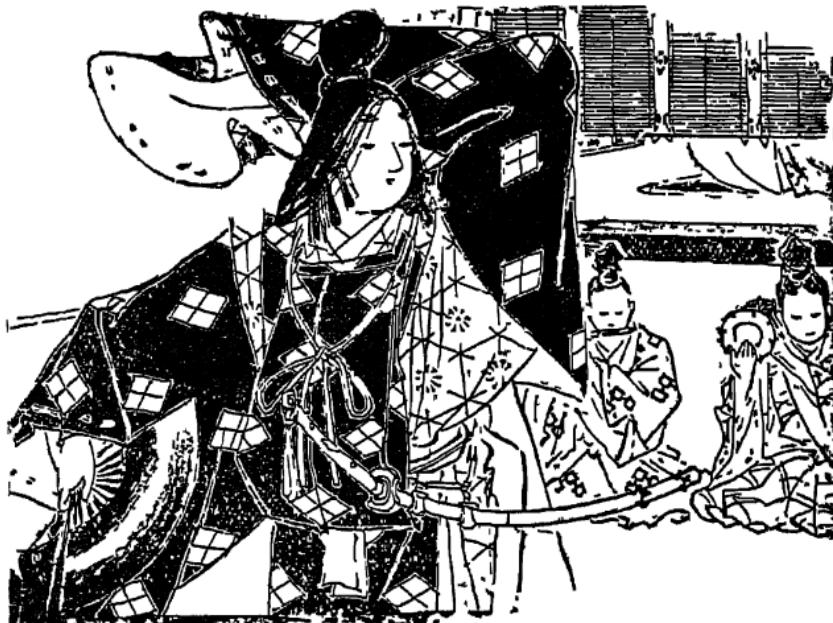
Two days later (June 21) I attended a quite different gathering of poets. The *tanka* poets were custodians of the Japanese tradition. The members of the poets' club (I forget its name) to whose dinner I was taken by Noguchi, were moderns, breakers of tradition who symbolised their revolt by dining in European clothes off European viands with European machinery at a restaurant which might have been anywhere but in Japan. We gathered in a reception room and drank green tea. I found it very difficult to get into conversation with any but a couple of the poets. It may have been shyness on their part or nervousness as to their English. We waited for an hour and a half before dinner was announced. After dinner we assembled in another room and several (including myself) read a poem each. There was no keenness, no sparkle, no fire—yet who knows what

energies were working behind this superficial dullness? Plato saw in any change in a country's music a threat against the established political order; and it may be that the police of Japan (who are zealous in their efforts to stamp out "new thought,") should perform an act of contrition to the Comic Muse for their placing of More's "Utopia" on their list of forbidden books (!) and turn their attention to the poetical iconoclasts who, though they may never sing a line against things as they are, are introducing new mental and emotional rhythms that may shatter the moulds of national thinking and feeling.

\* \* \*

Three days later (June 28) I passed from the Japan of the twentieth century transition to the Japan of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Buddhist culture, which had shaped itself into stories, was dramatised and given the form known as the Noh-dance. The 'dances' are the Japanese equivalents of the English miracle plays out of which the Elizabethan drama evolved; but while the miracle plays of England were long and elaborate, the miracle plays of Japan are small in substance and reduced to the utmost simplicity and suggestiveness. But if the

Noh-plays are short in their printed form, they take up a considerable time in performance, as they are sung throughout, and the point of each play is some emotional crisis which is expressed in a long, slow dance. In addition to the actors there is a chorus which, after the manner of the Greek chorus, recounts such parts of the drama's progress as cannot be directly enacted. The vocal method—a slow guttural



THE NOH-DANCE

chant—is very peculiar to western ears, yet it is ultimately felt to be the true articulation of a drama whose burden is always supernatural and whose method is 'unnatural' from beginning to end. There is not a realistic moment in

the Noh-drama. Its voice is artificial; its instrumental accompaniment is merely a series of ejaculations on two drums and a flute (though a true hearer counts the silences as part of the music); its actors wear masks. It is sheer artifice—and its effect is the most intense that I have ever felt. At this, my first hearing, I was deeply impressed, and learned, with some disappointment, that the art, far from being a popular institution, was a belated survivor of Japan's old culture, and was kept alive by groups of the æsthetically faithful in small halls such as that in which the performance I am speaking of was held before about two hundred people who evidently treated the performance as a solemn occasion.

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My first Noh-drama is doubly memorable for a circumstance not concerned with the drama itself. I was taken to the performance as the guest of one of the patrons of such a hall—Professor M. Togawa, a colleague in Keio University. Noguchi accompanied me. We occupied Professor Togawa's box, that is to say, a square space on the floor of the hall marked off by wooden partitions a few inches high and capable of seating six persons at a pinch. My attention was attracted by an elderly lady two

boxes removed from us, who closely followed the performance with a book and appeared to make marginal notes. She was evidently a devotee, and I asked who she was. To my great delight I was told that she was the widow of the writer who, perhaps more than any other, has disclosed the inmost soul of Japan to the world—Lafcadio Hearn. I asked if it was possible, without offending Japanese etiquette, to be introduced to her. Happily it was, and at the next interval after my discovery I was on my knees in her box making my salutations to the beloved comrade and helper of one of the chief divinities in the literary pantheon of my youth. My respects were translated by my two sponsors and received with beautiful dignity by Mrs. Hearn, who invited me to visit her at her home which she kept just as it was during her husband's lifetime. Thus my lucky star led me towards the fulfilment of one of two wishes which I had brought with me to Japan—the other being to see the place where Edwin Arnold lived. This I failed to do, as it was no longer in existence.

Sometime later I fulfilled my first wish. I was piloted by Professor Togawa to the simple and beautiful Japanese home in Okubo on the outskirts of Tokyo, where the writer of

sensitive body and brain spent the odorous home hours of the last ten years of his life, and out of a sometimes too rigorous solitude and labour gave to the world the precious gift of beautiful literature. Once the home of Hearn was a place of seclusion, calling for a long rickshaw ride to and from the Imperial University for his lectures on English literature. Now it is in a thickly populated suburban district, a short journey from the city by electric railway, and overshadowed by a large and noisy school. "To think of art, or time, or eternity in the dead waste and muddle of this mass is difficult," he wrote to a friend (It would be ten times more difficult now!) yet he managed to turn out eight of his books in the eight years between his removal from the country district of Izumo in 1896 to "this detestable Tokyo" and his sudden death in 1904 at the comparatively early age of 54. He was never robust in body, yet it is a simple fact that he died of overwork in his desire to give literary expression to the Japan of his dreams. He had been sent to Japan (in 1890) by a publishing house to write a book on the country, and had remained to mingle his life with its life, marrying one of its sweetest souled and most cultured daughters, and passing into its record as *Yakomo Koizumi*.

Mrs. Hearn (known to Japan as Mrs. Koizumi) joined us in a few minutes on the floor of the guest-room. Green tea followed. Through the interpretation of Professor Togawa we talked around many topics from weather to the Noh-drama until I found the degree of delicacy with which one might approach the central interest in the life of the little black-haired lady in dark *kimono*, who sprang into her face as she spoke, and between question and answer sat on her knees in the silence that is nine-tenths of the secret of the soul of Japan. She was pleased with my knowledge of the life of her husband, and with my critical appreciation of his writings which had been one of my enthusiasms and consolations in the unliterary city of my birth (Belfast) in the eighteen-nineties. The mention of Ireland drew out her interest, for Hearn was the son of an Irishman, though his mother was a Greek. She showed me all her treasures associated with her husband—his table, his seat, his pipes, his well-used volumes of Herbert Spencer's writings, and the shrine for his spirit which was set up in his study, and in which a light is placed as the symbol of spiritual illumination, and bread offered as an indication of the unchanging service of consecrated love.

Tea was laid on the table at which Hearn used to write—not the cup of green tea of politeness, but an elaborate family meal to which I was admitted, much to my surprise and pleasure. Her children (now young men and women) were out at their various avocations, she explained, but she hoped I would come again and meet them. In any case, Mr. Koizumi would look down at us out of a large framed portrait hanging on the wall. I conveyed to her my special pleasure at the occasion, as it was my wife's birthday, and she, in India, would be delighted to hear that I had celebrated the occasion in such memorable circumstances. The good lady was now touched. She knew what separation meant, and realised the preciousness of apparently small things that bring the touch of unity in heart and mind, despite the gulf of distance in my case, and of time in hers. She seemed to scrutinise me compassionately, sometimes almost furtively. She looked occasionally at Hearn's portrait above us, and I thought she was linking it up somehow with me. I felt there was some resemblance, perhaps, in the shape of the head, and she may have recalled some similarity of complexion through our Irish parentage. At the door, when we were leaving, she was almost

jaunty, as if some familiar thing of the heart had come to the surface of life. She pressed me to come again—but my recall to India came before I could do so. Her last words, translated by Professor Togawa, were: “You are the first man in the fifteen years since my husband’s death who has recalled him vividly to me.”

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A MASKED NOH ACTOR—PAGE 74



## CHAPTER V

### PERSONALITIES, FOREIGN AND NATIVE

MY circle of acquaintances received during the month of June an interesting extension which showed me some of the non-Japanese influences in the new Japan. I had already, at the suggestion of Rabindranath Tagore, made the acquaintance of Mr. E. E. Speight, a teacher in the School of Foreign Languages, and a poet whose work had attracted my attention in "The Modern Review" of Calcutta by its beauty.

Through him I met Mr. Bernard Leach whose name had come before my mind on my train journey from Kobé to Tokyo, when I read in "The Japan Advertiser" of the burning down of his kiln and the loss of most of the work that he had prepared for his annual exhibition of art-pottery. Mr. Leach had come out from England several years before, and was, as I learned later, exercising a profound influence in artistic handicrafts in Japan. He was

obviously an artist from head to foot, and especially to his finger-tips.



BERNARD LEACH—POET-POTTER-PAINTER—  
DRAWN BY HIMSELF

I had the happiness of developing my friendship with Mr. Bernard Leach on June 25 when Mr. Speight took me to the far side of the city to an exhibition of Mr. Leach's handicraftsmanship and art. I found that pottery was but one side of his creative activity. He was painter also, and etcher, and furniture maker; and

everything he produced had an individual touch. His works were but materialised syllables of his speech which cast forth from the centrifugal core of an eager mind a multitude of ideas on the theory and practice of the arts. Leach's conversation had an infective enthusiasm; and those of us who grouped ourselves around him (thus forming a barrier against the solid duty of attending to visitors

who might become purchasers) found ourselves mentally levitated to a plane above the thatched Korean roof and Korean-papered walls of the studio, from which level we saw his 'works' as but the playthings of genius seeking through them its own realisation. This, I thought to myself, is art in the freshness and wondering energy of childhood. My thought was caught up inwardly by the artist, who took up a piece of his pottery and declared that, in the matter of decoration, he wanted to get back to the simplicity of the child.

"Then you renounce tradition?"  
I queried.

"Outward tradition, yes; but the roots of tradition are within."

Here, thought I, is the real spirit of creation, and I wondered how Leach stood in relation to Japanese art. I knew that his life and closest friendships were Japanese; yet



A JUG BY LEACH

his work, in its almost crude coruscation of experimental virility, was the very antithesis of the traditional finesse and imaginative lethargy that I felt in Japanese painting. He had Japanese patrons and appreciators. These were neither patriotic perverts nor sentimental dilettantes. They were men of wide culture and responsibility. They indicated (as my more extended knowledge subsequently proved) a dislocation in the artistic life of Japan, and the opening of fissures through which new impulses from the inner worlds were finding a way into articulation. When tradition is solid, the reformer finds his scaffold or stake; when he finds appreciation, tradition has begun to crack. Leach was a reformer with appreciation, and I came to realise that he was one of the deepest and most beneficent influences in the cultural life of Japan at a juncture when its art was in danger of turning from imitation of itself to mere imitation of the worst elements in western art. Against dead formalism he flung the stinging challenge of new expressions of living form.

My friendship with the poet-potter-painter grew on both the artistic and domestic sides of his life. I watched him working in his pottery with concentrated energy and the swift,

sure movements and remarks of the master. In his Japanese home our attention was divided between art and childhood. His conversation, as usual, lifted me to the heights of the imagination; as compensation, his children ran me back through my incarnations to the days of my bear-hood, and made me repeat ancient quadrupedal exploits on the dining-room floor in the mysterious glooms of a forest composed of the legs of the dining-table and a few chairs.

\* \* \*

My first month in Japan concluded with the making of two friendships that not only enriched my personal pleasure during a phase of my life that had in it a large proportion of solitariness, but also kept me during the remainder of my stay in touch with some of the oblique external influences in the complex entity of the new Japan. On June 30 I lunched with Monsieur Paul Richard, the now well-known idealist, and dined with Mr. Hugh Byas, the Managing Editor of the most important English daily paper in the Far East, "The Japan Advertiser".

The names of "Paul and Mirra Richard" had been known to me for several years both in England and India as those of the Co-Editors with Mr. Arabindo Ghose (the great Indian

patriot and philosopher) of the monthly magazine "Arya". I had read "Arya" with much profit, and had developed a deep reverence for its Editor-in-Chief, and much admiration for the intellectual power of Monsieur Paul Richard. I had not met either of them, and was not aware of the fact that Monsieur and Madame Richard were out of India. I was pleasantly surprised, therefore, to get a letter from them inviting me to their home on the outskirts of Tokyo.

Madame Richard met me at Shimbashi electric station. She did so on Monsieur Richard's behalf as he was not confident of his English; also because there was some complication in the route to their home. Madame Richard probably (and if so rightly) surmised that I would more easily identify her in a crowd of Japanese than find my way to Shinjuku. There were several Europeans at the station when I reached it, but I knew Madame Richard immediately though I had never seen her before. She was different.

Monsieur Richard also was different. I had figured him to myself as—well, as a Frenchman; and here was a bearded giant with the movement and atmosphere of masterfulness. His reception of me was as warm as anyone could

desire ; yet I thought I caught in his eyes not exactly a coldness but some kind of inquisitorial aloofness—quite natural towards a stranger, but interesting me because of its acuteness. I felt at once in our conversation the impacts of a powerful mind, and noticed that my own was stimulated as it had not been for a long time in its movements of adjustment to a metaphysical vocabulary which was familiar as to terms but just sufficiently unfamiliar in its groupings and implications to keep my mind pleasantly busy in grasping and replying. Occasionally I felt some touch of bewilderment, as if I had argued myself into a false mental position or contradiction. I could not see for a time how this had been accomplished, but I admired Monsieur Richard's dexterity. Then, all of a sudden, I realised that during the first quarter of an hour of what began to assume the appearance of an intellectual duel, Monsieur Richard had changed certain of his fundamentals. I saw that this could not be otherwise than deliberate, and I deduced that he was testing my own ground and convictions. I at once began to play the same game with Monsieur Richard, and after a few turns in our mental waltz he broke into a naive laugh and exclaimed (with an accent that no phonetics could reproduce) :

"I perceive that you are very dangerous to me."

I queried why.

"You have found me out."

"Yes," I said, "you always take the other side. You like to find out people's convictions—and break them."

"That is true. Only weak minds rest in convictions. Supermental truth can be approached from all sides. But I cannot play any more with you. Your mind is one of the most agile (he pronounced it *azhéel*) I have ever met. You will be very dangerous for me—and very good for me."

On these terms we began an association which had interesting consequences, as I shall recount in their proper place.

I passed in the evening from the abstract to the concrete, from philosophical universals to plain talk of the political and cultural realities of Japan. Through the kind offices of a fellow professor I was invited to dinner by Mr. and Mrs. Byas. Mr. Hugh Byas, a Scotsmen, had been on the staff of "The Daily News" in London, and had gravitated to Japan where he had become probably the strongest and sanest influence on the foreign press. A Radical (British type) in politics, he was cautious ('canny') by

race and temperament, and in his leading articles in "The Japan Advertiser" (which for my education I had read daily since my arrival) one felt the push of a mind that desired rapid progress in human affairs, but that would not cast away sureness to any passing wind of haste. As a Celt, with the sensitiveness of his race he realised his position as a guest of the Japanese nation; and while he served the Japanese by acting as an outside critic to a people whose leaders were desirous of standing well in the estimation of the outside world, he never overstepped the bounds of good manners to indulge in impertinent fault-finding or in expressions of race-superiority which in their very claim deny their claim.

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The Japan of the transition was hard at my heels and did not let me rest with foreign personalities. My diary for June 29 opens with—"7 a.m. Started for Kamakura with The Young Party". But behind this bare record, and twisting in and out among the other events that I have spoken of, was a rapidly extending and widely ramifying system of roots from which the tree of my Japanese friendship was growing. My class-room lectures in literature has sequelae on the floor of my room (sometimes

on the front platform if the sun was inviting), when academic study deepened into exchanges of literary conviction with a small group of my students (and a couple from other colleges) who had impulses and ambitions beyond the mere matter of graduation. Some of them had already published books of poetry and were gaining recognition as literary pioneers. They were mainly influenced by French poets, such as Paul Fort, but they had a wide knowledge of the work of other moderns. They printed a small monthly magazine called "Shio" (Poetry). So far as I could gather, their work was largely derivative in style and substance. If a French writer published Pictures of Paris in verse, a young Japanese poet published Pictures of Yokohama in verse. I perceived that much of their cultural delight (in which I shared, for there is nothing so purifying and disinterested) was in a kind of poetical athleticism, the performance of what the Americans call 'stunts'. I longed for some more authentic expression of these clean and gentle young souls and their own national genius, and my longing drew them closer about me, in response, probably, to the spontaneous affection which I conceived for them. By and by the deepening came, and was acknowledged. Meantime

they discovered that (as one of them put it), the grey in my hair was like the snow on a volcano; it covered the fire of incorrigible youth. They found me, they said, as young as themselves, and therefore without any excuse for not becoming a member of The Young Party. There were no rules save those of happy youth; no officers save those who would help in any way needed; no subscription save a perpetual contribution of mutual happiness (even to the extent of carrying one another's umbrellas, which diminished no burdens but lightened the heart); no programme save that of the season and desire. Initiation was achieved by participation in an adventure. Hence my starting at 7 a.m. on June 29 for Kamakura.



"STREETS BROAD AND NARROW"

My starting-point was Tamachi station on the electric railway, which was about ten minutes' walk from the University through

streets broad and narrow that were a perpetual fascination to me in their glimpses of the busy life of the artizan classes of Japan. The universal electrification of the country has taken power, as well as light, into the most remote cottage. Every house on my walk to (and from) the station was a centre of industry. Whole families, on floor or at bench, were to be seen turning out all sorts of articles for use and ornament. These were not for foreign export, but for Japanese use, and they had to satisfy perhaps the most highly developed artistic taste (within certain limits) in the world. Here, I thought, was the happy medium between slow, laborious handicraft and soulless machine manufacture. The major sin of modern industrialism is the crushing out of the worker of the joy of participation in the divine act of creation. Human beings are reduced from whole-natured labour to unintelligent participation as mere 'hands' (identified by numbers on a time register) in making something whose totality is beyond their interest. But the nation-wide distribution of electrical power in Japan seemed to me to do little or nothing to reduce the intimacy of the worker and the work, while it expedited certain purely mechanical processes—and, as a secondary, but important

result, increased and widened the earning power of the people.

Tamachi means 'Rice-field street,' but he would be a clever man who could find a rice-field within miles of the station to-day. It was in waiting at this and other stations on the electric railway that I carried on my education in the Japanese language and scripts. I memorised visually the signs that I saw, and took occasion to ask my Japanese colleagues in the University what the signs stood for. For a long time certain signs inlaid in white (or perhaps painted) down a tall factory chimney beside the station eluded my comprehension. They read: *mee ree koo sho ko ra toh*. To-day, under the inspiration of youth and adventure, their secret flashed upon me. It was—*Milk chocolate* translated into the restricted vocal system of Japan! I had also to memorise phrases for asking for tickets in train and tram. Thus I found my way (a little way but significant to the mentally sensitive) into the Japanese genius by the gates of sight and sound. I got into the secret of her ideo-graphic script through learning that *Ta* (rice-field) was represented by a square cut into four small squares—a simple drawing of a paddy-field anywhere in Asia, while *machi* (street) was symbolised by a similar device—

representing a block of buildings—with an appendage indicating a pathway. I touched the national rhythm in getting into my head such pieces of poetry as:



TA MACHI

Shinagawa,  
Ofku, nito,  
Ichi mai,  
Kudasai.

This was the chant I chanted at the booking office window at Tamachi station on the morning I am speaking of, as I booked for the station at which I was to meet The Young Party. In English it runs thus:

Merchandise-river,  
Return, second class,  
One ticket,  
If you please.

On such occasions (for obvious linguistic reasons) I refrained from discussions; and if I had not the exact money ready, I accepted without question what change God gave me. If I lost anything (and I do not think I did) through my early inexpertness with *yen* and *sen* (a *yen* was then almost the equivalent of a rupee, or one shilling and four pence), it was more than compensated by what I gained in

the coinage of heart and brain. What is a *yen* when one has waiting for one at Merchandise-river a lady bearing the name Pretty-flower, and, in her dainty Japanese way, looking it? In a moment or two Mr. Arrow-head whizzed along in college uniform, partially cloaked in a cape, and surmounted by a black wide-awake hat. So rapidly did he effect introductions that I had not time to do more than catch the sounds—Mr. Suzuki, Miss Suetaka (accent on the second syllable *e* which is pronounced like the *ay* in tray), Mr. Kohno, Mr. Kamata, and “my sister”.

We took the steam-train from Shinagawa to Fujisawa, some forty-five minutes' run to the west of Tokyo. There we changed into an electric tramway whose terminal was on the seashore. From thence we walked across the neck of a promontory to Kamakura Bay. I was much interested in seeing Japanese country life at close quarters. My total impression was that Japan was Japan wherever you went. The houses in the country were the same (if less fresh) as those in the city. Tokyo was Japan squeezed into discomfort; the country was Tokyo planted out, so to speak, and attaining thus a certain individuality and approachableness not possible in crowds.

We rested on the seashore under the town of Kamakura, once the seat of the last of the great barons (*shoguns*), now a seaside resort. Here was the centre of power of the great Tokugawa family, whose founder, Iyeyasu, governed Japan in the opening years of the seventeenth century with the rigidity of a Roman. The last of the line resigned his power in 1868 in order that the Mikado might again, after a thousand years of virtual imprisonment, re-assume the temporal, as he had always held the spiritual, sovereignty of Japan. Many a bloody battle had been fought around the shores of the ocean that now smiled at the fatuous animosities of humanity. A number of small boys were swimming in the lazy waters of the bay. They dragged with them wooden tubs in and out of which they derived noisy joy. A large dog swam about with obvious hilarity. He was followed by a small dog (an acquaintance, not a relation) which sometimes caught the big dog's tail in his mouth and let himself be towed along, and sometimes jumped on the big dog's back with all the signs of a school-boy having a free ride.

We lunched *al fresco* at a restaurant at the entrance to the grounds in which stands (or, rather, sits) the 'Dai Butsu' (Great Buddha),



THE YOUNG PARTY AND THE DAI BUTSU



one of the most famous statues in the world. There was a certain restraint on our jollity, for we had passed through a gate guarded by two threatening *Devas* (angels) and were on ground sanctified by religious devotion and romantic history. Art and religion had conspired to raise here in 1252 a transcendent image of Man-made-perfect in compassion. Human solicitude (which is usually narrow in view) had, once upon a time, built about the image a vast imprisoning temple. Nature had sent her angels of release who scattered the temple with the wind of protest, and left the Great More-than-Man (*Dai-Butsu*) forever to the environment of hills and trees, sunlight and shade, magical moonlight, and darkness full of presences. The figure is thirty feet high from the platform on which it sits squatted in meditation. It is made of bronze plates, and is hollow inside. I went into it, and ascended the ladder to the inside of the head. But familiarity with the physical aspect of the image did not reduce the impression of a vast reality which invests it. It is not merely a colossal metal figure; it is a presence, and a presence not only in the responsive artistic imagination, but in that central point of one's being from which one draws the convictions of reality that are beyond logic.

We had a photograph of our party taken under the Dai Butsu. The wedding-party appearance that is given to the picture (reproduced in this book) by the bouquet in the hand of the lady in the centre was due to the fact



#### THE KOTTO

that our excursion coincided with the season of tiger-lilies. These grew in large quantities along the low hillsides, and the young men of the party gathered bunches for the ladies.

We spent the late afternoon in the home of another member of The Young Party, Mr. Little Lake, who joined us at Kamakura. Here I had my first hearing of one of the old Japanese musical instruments, the *kotto*, a long instrument which rests on the floor, and is strung in silk, and played by plucking with plectra attached to the thumb and first two fingers. We returned home late at night—and thus I was made a life member of The Young Party of Japan.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE JAPANESE ART-INSTINCT

I RECEIVED my first full month's salary on July 1 and determined to signalise the event in a suitable manner. In my 'wild oats' period in Ireland, when I felt the impulse to do something desperate, I took myself to a music hall to stand as much as I could of its banality ; and perhaps in a fit of extra bravado (a reaction no doubt against my early puritanical upbringing) I drank a whole bottle of lemonade in the bar. But this procedure did not seem good enough



COLOUR-PRINTING, FIRST STAGE

for a Professor in Japan. Instead, I asked Mr. Speight to lunch and dine with me in my

college room, and in the interval to take me to some of the places where I might buy a few examples of the Japanese colour-printers' art for my education.

There was something very fascinating in sitting on the edge of the platform of various print-sellers' shops and turning over stacks of prints each more attractive than the last in its artistic peculiarity. I was quite a fool in my choice of a dozen pieces. I did not know a master from an apprentice; I could not distinguish early from late; first editions and modern reprints were all the same to me. I just took what pleased me, as pictures, to the amount of the tithe of my income, to which extent I had voluntarily taxed myself on behalf of art. I became



FROM A COLOUR-PRINT BY OKYO, 1733-1795



wiser (and less satisfied) later, when, partly from monthly adventures to get rid of a portion of my salary, (when I gathered the names, dates and styles of the colour-printers of 'The Passing World' school of Japanese art,) and partly from book-reading, I came to get a view of the extraordinary phase in Japanese art which began about 1600 and ended in 1860—began as a popular amusement;

FROM A COLOUR-PRINT BY HOKUSAI, 1760—1849 was carried on

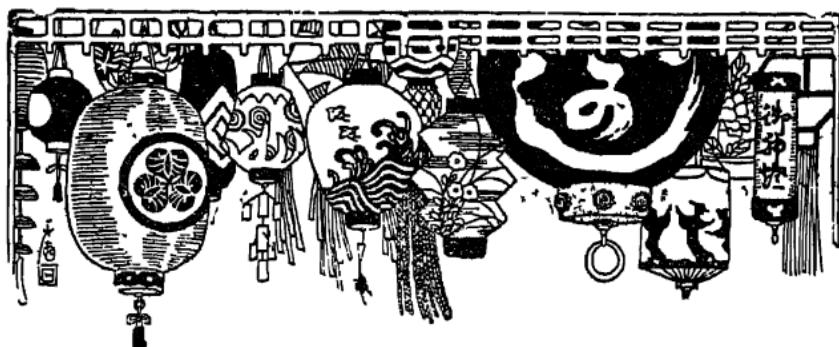
by three hundred artists who were ranked as simple artisans pursuing what was in all its operations a pure handicraft; and perished in the flood of westernisation, leaving a vast mass of work of yearly increasing value, and an addition of several names (such as Hiroshige and Hokusai) to the roll of the world's masters in design, colour and drawing.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

The day of my artistic initiation was also Peace Day, the official day of celebration of the termination of the world-war. Along the thoroughfare in front of the University, paper lanterns had been hung on the outside of the footpath at intervals of a few feet. These were illuminated by electric bulbs. I had watched the putting up of these lanterns for some days, and had indulged in certain reflections concerning them. One such reflection was as to the length of time that would have elapsed, in my young days and environment, between the final touches to the lantern and the first trial of how near one could get to the middle of the lantern with a stone. Strange as it may appear to a non-Asian, this mile of flimsy paper affairs, exposed without protection, stood for a number

<sup>1</sup> For a short history of the *Yukiyōe* or 'Passing World' school, see chapter IX of the author's book "Work and Worship".

of days, and I never saw a sign of damage to one of them, though daily hundreds of boys and girls passed along the street to various elementary schools, and the army of Keio undergraduates invaded the University. The side of each lantern towards the footpath bore a coloured picture. I gathered that these represented connected incidents in well-known stories. To my great delight and edification I watched one day a tiny mite of a girl copying one of the pictures with a pencil into a notebook. It was a revelation to me of the art-instinct of Japan, just as the respect for common property and mutual pleasure was a revelation of the sense of civic unity and responsibility even in school-children.



SILK AND PAPER LANTERNS

And yet there were elements in the life of Japan as I saw it which puzzled me. There was no mistaking the universal intense personal

delight in artistic objects; yet some of these objects, while exquisite as regards material and craftsmanship, were hideous in subject—masks, for instance, in ivory, wood or clay, representing vile demoniacal countenances. There was keen sensibility to certain kinds of form, and obliviousness to others. For example, the Japanese woman of means will wear a belt and bow (*obi*) of wonderful beauty, and she will put over it for tram or train-travelling a cloak that hangs from the neck out beyond the bow of the *obi* and thence downwards in a series of awful angles that turn her into a hunchback. The streets of Tokyo are fringed with forests of ugly electric poles hardly one of which is perpendicular. Some of these are planted right against beautiful buildings. The country from Tokyo to Nikko is made horrible by immense multiple electric poles and wires. It is not easy to understand how a people so sensitive to beauty in the particular should be so insensitive to ugliness in the general and especially to juxtapositions of beauty and ugliness.

\* \* \*

I kept my physical and mental eyes open for illumination on these matters chiefly during my week-end visits to Noguchi's home when I had crushingly close contacts with Japanese

humanity in trains and trams and sundry walks. During these happy week-ends my insight into the character of the poet grew, likewise my admiration, which deepened ultimately into affection. I had read his life, and knew of his wanderings in America and England; but the historical aspect of him, and the peculiarity in his English speech, became secondary to the direct disclosure of the flower-like genius of the poet. I came across him frequently at the University between lectures and at luncheon; but it was in his home life, where he was the pure Japanese poet and head of a family (who, incidentally to this fundamental life, had added the English-speaking world to his consciousness) that the essential being blossomed. It would do violence to the truth of his nature if I spoke of him as 'shining'. In moments of mutual enthusiasm he did not glow or crackle or bubble, as, I fear, his Irish companion did; he simply effloresced.

At some time in the first few weeks of our companionship my somewhat impetuous mind jumped to the generalisation that Noguchi, in his excellences and his limitations, was the most typical entity in Japan. I had begun to perceive that the absence of the abstract quality in the mentality of my students which I have

already mentioned was not a defect of youth, or of a new generation, but was common to professors as well as students, and to professional and business men whom I met. In public utterances and press comments (which of course I could only read in translation) I missed the touch of spiritual idealism. Everything mental seemed to be immediate, small, clear. There was no feeling of 'long views,' of large conceptions, of the wavy edge that is characteristic of the horizon of mystical vision. But this mental character was acted upon by a unique æsthetical sense which, where it could not interiorly influence the mental nature, at least set the mark of art somewhere upon it, and let the incongruity speak its own message. The general result of this collaboration of a visual, non-abstract mentality with a keen sensibility to a limited range of manifestations of beauty, was an expression in life of a pervasive artistic quality like the charm of a delicate perfume. There was no loud music in it, no high lights, no abandon of either assurance or despair. I had not yet come into personal contact (as I did later) with the destructive cataclysmic Powers of Nature that make life in Japan a thing of menace and uncertainty ; but I had read and heard of them, and felt that in some way the general hostility

of nature reacted on the consciousness of the nation and formed an important ingredient in the total impression of flower-like fragility and impermanence in the people as a whole and in Noguchi as their typical personality. But I had yet a good many things to learn; and meantime I loved the gentle poet for the gentle love that he shed in his home, and for the glimpses that I got into the sweetened and odorous twilight of his nature.

\* \* \*

Just about this time (my diary fails me here) my attention was attracted by a mask that hung in the entrance hall of Noguchi's house. I had noticed it casually before, but the process of removing foot-wear and exchanging greetings did not allow time for examination. On the occasion to which I refer I suddenly recognised the hanging object as the death-mask of Francis Thompson. Noguchi observed my startled recognition and faintly smiled. In reply to my questioning he told me that he had been given this copy of the mask by Francis Meynell in London with strict injunctions that he was not to let it out of his possession or to allow it to be copied.

It was my habit during these week-end visits to take a rest in the afternoon on a couch

in the poet's studio, and I had to discipline myself out of annoyance at a leering stage-mask that hung on the wall above the foot of the couch. An idea struck me—we would exchange the places of the masks. My suggestion was accepted, and the family (maid-servant included) and myself formed a quaint procession as Noguchi carefully took the mask of the immortal English poet from the hall to the studio and hung it up amongst its affinities. Thereafter my siesta was watched over by that wonderful face, and my thoughts pondered the mystery of art that gave to us in Japan that permanent last look of one of earth's choicest souls. So intimate did I become with the mask, and so amazingly did the changings of the afternoon light change its expression, that it became a living thing to my imagination—nay, as something beyond the transiency of mortal flesh. For two years after I left Japan, my imagination was haunted by that face—a ghost that I could only lay by a spell of my own making.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

The shuttle of the invisible Weaver shot across the warp of my Japanese life on July 8

<sup>1</sup> "Installation Ode—for the placing of the death-mark of Francis Thompson in the home of Yoné Noguchi in Japan;" published in "Surya Gita".

when an American professor on his way to India spent a few crowded hours in the capital of Japan. I had corresponded with Dr. Lewis Chase some years previously. He was interested in the Irish literary and dramatic movement, and lectured in America on the work of the poets, including my own. I had not heard from him for some time, and he was probably under the impression that I was sitting by the side of the Lakes of Killarney eating shamrock and rhyming about Celtic Gods and Goddesses. As a collector of literary scalps, Dr. Chase called on Noguchi, and learned to his surprise that I was 'right there'. He sent a special messenger to the University to ask me to go to the Imperial Hotel for lunch with him, after which I took him for a cruise round the parts of Tokyo that I could navigate with least danger of losing him or myself, and landed him safely at tea in my room. It happened that a colleague had given me an invitation to see the performance of a play of his at the Imperial Theatre that night. Dr. Chase was free, and anxious to see as much of Japan as he could in the twenty-four hours before leaving Tokyo to rejoin his steamer at Kobé. I determined to risk adding him to my invitation. Happily my assumption as to the elasticity of my colleague's

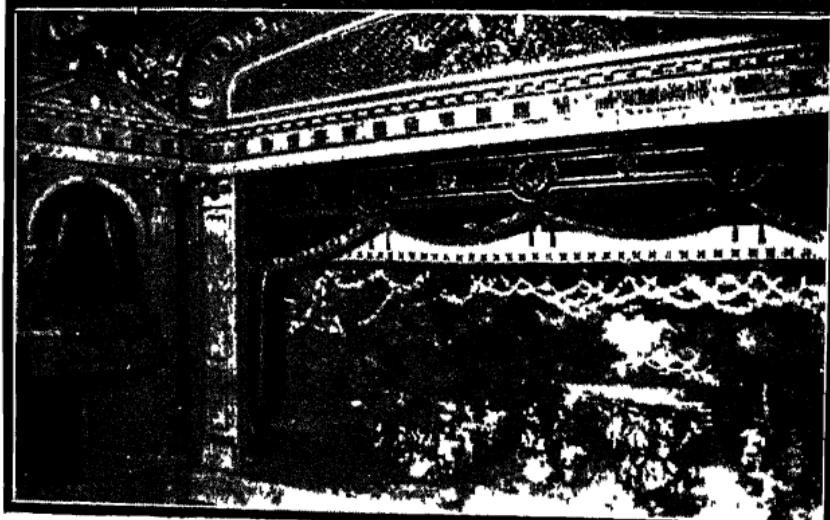
hospitality proved true, and we had two excellent seats at what was, indeed, my own first seeing of the Japanese 'legitimate' drama, as contrasted with the classico-religious Noh-drama and the 'popular'.



DRAMA—ANCIENT

The first item in a tripe bill was a romantic historical drama staged in a manner that, at the first look, put western presentations into the category of coarse crudities. The colour schemes were exquisite in tone and harmony; and the figures, moving across and among the stage environment in the wonderful costumes of the period, seemed to comport themselves as if they were groups in a perfect picture that came for a moment into dynamic life in order to

regroup themselves in another perfect picture. I was particularly struck with the extraordinarily beautiful effect when the jet black coiffures of the women came together. The scene of the play was realistic, but its realism was pure art because it was pure Japan either in the exposure of the interior of a Japanese house, or the juxtaposing of a pine tree and the moon. There were items of theatrical convention, but these, curiously enough, did not disturb the realism. For example, when a character needed to make some change in costume, or when something required to be shifted, a man with a dark cloth over his face glided on to the stage, performed the necessary service, and either withdrew or retired to a corner. Now this person was not in the drama: he was technically invisible: his veil was the symbol of darkness from the point of view of the audience though he himself could see through it for the performance of his task. There was also, as in the Noh-drama, a chorus who chanted at times in reinforcement of the emotion of the scene. As the curtain came down a man came on to the stage on one side on his knees, and with two pieces of wood whacked on the floor an accompaniment to the fall of the curtain which sounded like the brake of a capstan. When the



THE IMPFRIAL THEATRE, TOKYD



curtain had completely fallen there was silence for a moment—and the audience moved out for the interval. In the applauding silence at the end of the first act, my friend and I sat taking in the impressive significance of what we had seen. Its beauty and grace had touched us both to unspoken comparisons. Suddenly he jerked his eyes full into mine, and put all his feeling (and mine) into the words:

“Aren’t *we* cows?”

I agreed with him in general, but had a secret desire to explain that personally I felt both by race and sex more like an Irish bull. There was, however, a ferocious seriousness about him that deterred me from jest, and we adjourned to the refreshment room—bent more on observation than lubrication.

The passages were crowded with the brain and beauty of Japan—the masculine gender largely in faultless western evening dress (which turns out also in the afternoon, and never succeeds in looking otherwise than foreign to the lines of the Japanese face and figure); the feminine in the ever beautiful Japanese *kimono* and *obi* and *geta* and a coiffure which, if not beautiful, is distinctive. (A colour-print in the first dozen of my ‘collection’ showed a Japanese lady in the American dress of

1860 or thereabouts; but the instinct of the Japanese woman took fright at the glaring contradiction between the lines of her face and body and those of the western hat and costume. She returned to the coverings of her own tradition which had shaped themselves naturally to her own physical geography.) Little groups of men and women entertained one another, and, as they met and parted or exchanged passing greetings, they did so with the universal bow from the waist upwards with

hands on knees, and not with one bow (as the laconic habit of other peoples is) but with a succession of bows. The doctor again jerked his eyes full into mine. He was evidently suffering from some kind of revelation. He put his mouth to one of my ears (my diary does not state which) and hoarsely whispered: "Don't you hear yourself creak?" As a matter of fact I did not,



for I had had over a month's start of him. I merely looked at him with that complicated look out of which one may pick up just such elements as one desires.

The second item on the play-bill was that of my colleague. It was a drama of life today, and in its mixture of furnishings and dress was (although the author was not subtle-minded enough to intend it so) a satire on the modern Japanese jumble. As the drama went on I became uneasy in mind. I began to feel that it had another title, born in Europe, and that the name of the dramatist should end in *ski* or *koff*. I put my difficulty as delicately as I could to the dramatist, and learned that his play was neither original nor translated, but a reincarnation of the soul of a European play. There are quite a number of such plays on the Japanese stage, I was told.

As a compliment to our host the reincarnator, and an education to the American professor, I gave them a dinner *a la Japan* in a restaurant somewhere near the roof of the theatre. The doctor had been accustomed to dressing for dinner. It was something new to him to have to take off his boots to dine; to sit cross-legged on the floor; and to use two pieces of stick for everything

instead of separate knives and forks for each item. But he rose to the occasion (paradoxical though it may appear in his position), and we had a jolly meal, the price of which he characterised as much less stiff than his legs when he attempted to reassume the perpendicular. We missed the third item, made a tour of the stage and green-rooms under the ægis of our host, were introduced to several officials of the theatre, and parted.

We were fortunate in having struck the period in which women are graciously permitted to act. Normally the Japanese stage is single-sexed, and for the enactment of female parts rears a species of male actor who cultivates a falsetto voice and an equally falsetto manner. As artifice, female impersonation on the Japanese stage is wonderful. One feels inclined to weep oneself when a man-woman yowls and sobs and dabs its nose with a cloth for a quarter of an hour; but one realises afterwards that this response comes for neural infection: it is the reproduction of artifice, not the creation of art. Happily the claims of art and humanity have asserted themselves in Japan, and it is to be hoped that, before long, women will be permanently on the stage.

The following is a synopsis of one of the most popular dramas, "Kanjincho," a one-act classical drama based on an episode in the life of Yoshitsune, brother of the powerful baron (*shogun*) Yoritomo who at the end of the twelfth century ruled Japan from Kamakura, and reduced Kyoto, the capital, to impotence. Disguised as a beggar priest, Yoshitsune, with a few faithful followers, amongst whom is Benkei, the warrior priest, is stopped at the barrier of Ataka. On the pretence that they are travelling to collect funds for a temple, they are allowed to pass, but a guard finds an ordinary coolie among the supposed priests and suspects him to be the illustrious fugitive for whom they are searching. Benkei, to remove suspicion that the coolie may be his feudal lord, cuffs him and knocks him about as if he were a badly behaved servant. Suspicion is lulled and the party allowed to pass. But while Benkei is apologising to his lord for his rudeness, and his lord is accepting the apologies in the spirit in which they are given, an emissary from the keeper of the barrier appears to invite them to partake of saké. He has suspected the truth, and is so moved at the beautiful confidence existing between lord and retainer that he not only keeps his suspicion to himself but entertains them with wine.

The modern drama in Japan, as elsewhere, is under the sex-obsession, and presents to the clean and pliable drama of romance a lamentable contrast of meticulously worked-out eroticism and neuroticism. Happily it is finding some opposition from adaptations of plays by writers of genius like Lord Dunsany. I was introduced by Noguchi to a lady translator of Dunsany, Mrs. Katayama, and gave her some mental shocks over literal renderings of idiom or simile. Another developing force in drama is the production of short plays in exposition of Buddhist doctrine, of which there has recently been a revival. A leader in this movement is Mr. Sané-atsu Mushakoji, a member of the aristocracy who has taken to the simple life and agriculture on the physical side, and to drama and fiction on the mental.

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## CHAPTER VII

### A DOMESTIC EPISODE: PART 1

SUMMER seemed to come in with a rush on July 15. There had been a gradual greening in Shiba Park during the six weeks of my occasional visits. But on the day I speak of there was a new sense of colour ; yet, when I looked at things for a while, I perceived that nature was still green and brown ; it was humanity that had flowered, flowered into light-tinted *kimonos*—and ridiculous stiff straw sailor hats ; into fluttering fans and bare legs. All Japan and his wife and family seemed to have come out for an airing. The carp and tortoises profited accordingly. And they who could go farther afield than a city park were busy packing for the hill country, even as I was. Various plans for the two months' college vacation had passed before me, including a tramp in the district around Fujiyama and a stay in a temple ; but the final arrangement was a month's stay in a Japanese house on the slope of Japan's

most reliably active volcano, Asamayama, with the Richards, and a month with Mr. Speight at Japan's most beautiful spot, Nikko, the former burial place of the Tokugawa princes, and the present summer residence of the Emperor.

While I was making preparations for a period of intimacy with nature and life in rural Japan, an event occurred which, with its sequel two months later, linked me curiously in sympathy with the family of the club's cook who lived in the building adjoining my room. The family consisted of the cook, his wife, and two sons aged ten and twelve, or thereabout. Through various little reciprocal acts of kindness we had established a relationship whose cordiality managed to surmount the difficulties of language, and many a hearty laugh we had over things that never incarnated in words. I was told by colleagues that this family was typical of all Japanese family life. If this was so (and the Noguchi family and the family relationships that I saw on my wanderings in the park seemed to say it was so), Japanese home life is a thing to command admiration and reverence for its dignity and respect, its order and cheerfulness. The parents were real comrades and helpmates; the children were free and happy. My judgment of them

does not rest on mere moments of passing acquaintance and temporary good behaviour, but on the contacts of life by day and night in a Japanese home in which, because of its light construction, every movement is audible and without disguise.

The event to which I have alluded began at three o'clock in the morning of July 18 when I was awakened by a commotion in the cook's apartments. My *shoji* was open (for the warm weather was upon us), and I could see angularly across the fish-pond into their room. I became aware of the hasty bundling of the boys and their bedding into one of the club rooms, of a quick exit with sharp orders in Japanese which I could only divine. At intervals there were sounds of a woman in pain sometimes to the verge of hysteria; and low comforting sounds from a man in anxiety but showing assurance. By and by a stranger came: every tone of his voice was medicinal. I dozed, and waked, and dozed, feeling in myself the pang of every cry of the woman, yet being beyond the circumference of any help save that of prayer for another of the heroic souls who go down to the verge of 'the valley of the shadow' for the sake of new life. At 6.40 there came another cry, a little, thin, reedy cry, and the

satisfied laugh and conscious talk of a mother; and I knew that all was well. Later the cook came to my room to endeavour to explain their consciousness of my delicate situation at the centre of life in Japan, with not even paper windows between me and their mystery. There seemed to be two layers to his face, a layer of satisfaction over a layer of anxiety. We conversed vaguely in gesture with an occasional Japanese word. I think he caught from me my sympathy. He used the word *musuko*, which I took to mean another son. Later in the day I paid my respects to the new fragment of the Divine Life that had found incarnation, and offered the customary gifts.

The day became hot and thunderous to an almost unbearable degree. I packed and despatched my advance luggage to Oiwaké, the station for Asamayama.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### A HOLIDAY WITH A VOLCANO

NEXT morning (July 19) I left my room in the University for two months' holidays. I picked up Madame and Monsieur Richard at their local station on the electric railway on my way to Ueno station. The first part of our journey took us through low country, every inch of which seemed to be under cultivation and reminded me of my first impressions when travelling from Kobé to Kyoto. Mulberry bushes, for silkworm rearing, were plentiful. Later we began the climb towards the uplands. When the gradient became too steep for the pull of steam, electricity came to our help and gave us sporadic illumination at the contact-breakers in the twenty-odd short tunnels through which we crossed the lateral spurs of the hill-ranges.

We reached our station in the afternoon in a drizzle. The station, which is said to be the highest in Japan (3,200 feet above sea-level) consisted of a platform of ancient planks from

which a flight of steps, edged by equally ancient pieces of timber, led to a poor wooden affair that was the station proper.

The Richards' advance luggage had arrived ; mine had not. There was no other train that day. The station-master would wire and trace my belongings. There was nothing to do but temporise with circumstances, and extemporise with whatever luck had in store for me. The wooded mountainous country around us seemed to counsel the preservation of a sense of humour and adventure. Besides, the weather, though moist, was balmy. Besides also (as usual) my guardian Angel had seen to it that I should not be left in utter nakedness. I had used language that was in neither a Japanese nor an English dictionary (it sounds worse put thus than it really was) when the washerman had failed to send all my accoutrements in time for despatch the previous day. Now I blessed him as an agent of my beneficent destiny—for he had come just before my departure for the train with an apology and a parcel (wrapped as only Japan can wrap a parcel) containing certain articles that enabled me to smile a week ahead, provided only that my outer clothing did not get a wetting. Three days later my baggage turned

up in perfect condition. I had addressed the articles very plainly—OIWAKE and its Japanese equivalent. That was why they went wrong. It happens that there are several stations called Oiwaké (pronounced *Oh-ee-wa-kay*, and meaning Cross-roads) in Japan. My Oiwaké was an obscure affair that self-respecting trains passed without notice during ten months of the year. In July and August it was opened as a concession to a few Japanese who have a taste for volcanoes and mineral springs. Hence, my baggage, having no *ken* (district) marked on it, was sent to the station which railway logic decided to be the proper one for a European Professor of Keio University—an Oiwaké half way or less to the Arctic regions.

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Our house was a two-storeyed one, and in spotless condition. Its rear rooms opened on to the garden, beyond which a large tract of agricultural country subsided towards the pass and the railroad, and rose beyond them into a long range of hills.

Oiwaké village was once famous, and still boasts one of the most striking inns in the country. But it had come down in the world, socially speaking, and was now a habitation of

rather poor peasants. Like every other place in Japan, it was squirming with children (Japan puts a net increase of 800,000 to her population annually) whose sole occupation seemed to be the holding of public meetings in front of our house in the expectation of seeing *ijin-san* (Mr. Foreigner).

At one end of the village stood a votive stone lantern and an image of Kwannon, Goddess of Compassion, with hands placed palm to palm in protective benediction over the village. At the other end of the village the *torii* (entrance) to a shrine framed a view of the ever-active volcano that towered five thousand feet above the village with its perpetual smoke-plume.



A TORII

The dampness of our first two days kept the crest of Asamayama hidden; but this only seemed to add to the eerie suggestiveness of the great mountain

mass that everywhere seemed to move upwards towards some vast mystery of terror and fascination. The very forests took on the guise of processions of pilgrims towards a curtained flaming shrine.

From Oiwaké several main roads and many mountain-paths radiated—all bearing evidence, in cinders, whole or ground to black dust, of the nature of the place in which we had put our faith for a month. On one of these paths, about a mile from the village, Monsieur Richard and I came upon an image set up on a ditch—a figure in human form seated cross-legged. We saw that it was an object of reverence, for it had around it a number of small pieces of cinder which we knew to be 'the poor man's offering' to Deity. We observed that it was carved out of a large cinder that at some remote period had been cast out of the volcano. This fact stirred our imaginations very deeply. We saw in the image the recognition of the Power that wields the forces of nature. We saw also that the fiery labour of the mountain, though it had produced nothing better than cinders, was here justified in one of those cinders bearing the signature of the Divine. We felt we were near some profound significances in which the powers of nature and the life of humanity were closely linked. For myself, I was greatly satisfied in coming thus upon the religious element in Japanese life which I had not had an opportunity of contacting in the city. I do not feel that

I have touched the life of a community or country until I have shared in its religious ceremonial and approached the universal Divinity through the ways of thought and feeling that time and place have elaborated out of the dreams and intuitions and aspirations of humanity. I was born a Wesleyan Methodist. I have meditated in the beautiful church of Mansard (the architect of the Louvre) at Balleroy in Normandy. I have lit my candles to Joan of Arc in the cathedral of Rouen and to the Lord Buddha in the Shwe Dagon pagoda of Rangoon. I have held in my unworthy hands the relic of the Gautama Buddha in the Arrakan Pagoda at Mandalay. I have eaten food in company with the dancing God Shiva in South India and bathed my eyes in camphor smoke at the worship of Sri Krishna. And now, with reverent hands, I placed my pebble on the knees of "The God of the Way", the protector of travellers, and passed on my pilgrimage with the sweet and blessed sense of 'holy communion' with the truest and stablest thing in the life of Japan, and with the omnipresent Spirit of the Universe.

That afternoon, while walking with the son of Baron Hyashi, Governor of Manchuria and later Japanese ambassador to England, my





attention was drawn by him to a break in the cloud around the summit of Asamayama, and there I saw with a thrill for the first time the plume of volcanic smoke that tells of the perpetual fires which are still at the passionate heart of Earth despite the illusion of settled old age on its respectable surface. A thrush broke into a musical epigram as if he were in an Irish orchard. A small boy, close-cropped, with almond eyes, clad in juvenile *kimono* and petticoat, and wearing dusty *geta*, whistled "Auld Lang Syne".

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My days at Oiwaké were divided between literary work and country walks. The walks were short or long according to weather portents. We were in the Japanese monsoon season, when the process of heating over the vast Asian continent, which draws the moist air from the Indian Ocean across India, draws also the moist air of the Pacific across eastern Asia and precipitates it copiously on the land. The valley on our side of the volcano seemed to be a special favourite as a track for the armies of the storm-gods. Far away at intervals we could hear the distant drums of thunder playing a new storm up from the south-east. Up the valley it came, and when the legions

were passing directly overhead, it was sometimes a more nerve-trying experience than sitting on the sensitive floor of our room and feeling the earth tremble as if it were the flimsy cover of an immense explosive commotion. A flash of blue brilliance would bore a hole of blindness in our eyes, and instantaneously heaven and earth would rip with an appalling sound. This was the earth-striking lightning that slays. For some time these visitations confined themselves to the late afternoon and night, and we were thus able to go out for long morning excursions. I shall recount a couple of these as typical—but first as to Asamayama itself.

\* \* \*

Asamayama is ninety miles from Tokyo towards the north-west, half-way between the east and west coasts of the main island of the Japanese empire. Its crater edge is 7,800 feet above sea level. The village of Oiwaké is at an elevation of about three thousand feet, so that the volcano towers nearly five thousand feet above the village. The volcano does not present the customary conical appearance. But for its perpetual plume of smoke, it might easily be mistaken for an innocent mountain that had sunk into an eternal dream since the

foundations of the world were laid. It is, however, nothing else than a gigantic heap of cinders and lava. It has been in activity since before the dawn of human memory. At intervals the titanic trouble, or joy, or whatever it may be, at its heart overflows the limits imposed upon it by its past, and it sends a great stream of lava across the lip of its crater—a flood of withering scorn which, by an inversion of which Nature so well knows the secret, has the capacity of the greatest beneficence for humanity, for volcanic earth is exceedingly fertile, and around the base of Asamayama great stretches of forest with incalculable numbers of beautiful yellow lilies and purple iris, speak of the beauty and strength and gentleness that may come out of the tragedy of earth, as they come out of the tragedy of life.

And this beauty is not confined to details. There is something in the general effect of the landscape that appeals to one's sense of artistic form and arrangement, and that calls, for its hidden purposes, on the clouds that are "the daughters of earth and water, and the nurselings of the sky." Try to visualise from a roadside a foreground of rice-fields in all the light fresh greenness of youth, interspersed with fields of

wheat with bent heads of rusted gold. Then an irregular ascending slope of grass and shrubs. Beyond this, forests of pine trees that, as they recede up the mountain, throw off the restrictions that official hands would put upon them in groves and squares, and merge in one great horizon of serrated tops. Behind and above the pine horizon a band of white cloud stretches, breaking at points away from the main horizontal mass into variations such as make much of the charm of Japanese art. And above this the giant form of the volcano rises with its wavering smoke-cloud like a tuft of hair on the shaven head of a devotee of the fire-god.

The volcanic cloud has itself a beauty made out of the subtlety of change. When I first saw it, it rose in great volutes as smoke rises from the stack of a steamer when the fires are replenished, and floated away across the far side of the volcano. Next day the wind blew it in our direction, and it spread down the mountain side towards our village in a way that was not so pleasant or so beautiful as when its incalculable possibilities were directed elsewhere. The day afterwards, it again rose perpendicularly and steadily, and in the calm of twilight it spread out in a great level mass that passed from the original darkness of its colour into a whiteness

that made it one with the masses of evening cloud, until one could not tell which was the exhalation of the cold-blooded ocean or of the hot-blooded earth, for both were transfigured and blended in the rays of the setting sun.

Asamayama has not always expressed itself in simple overflows. A few years ago for a time it threw up showers of hot rock every two hours, and a number of European and Japanese persons who went too near the secret of the mountain paid the penalty in broken limbs and terror and death. Longer ago it wiped out with a smudge of dust a village on its flank. The luxuriance of the forests on the Oiwaké side of the mountain, and the size of some of the trees, put catastrophe in this district at a distant time. But it is never wise to calculate absolutely on a volcano's apparent habits. What has been in the behaviour of a volcano may easily be again, even with ages between. And what has been around Asamayama is clearly indicated in the soil turned over by the plough, a rich velvet-brown fine soil that is simply powdered lava and cinder. And when you come to look carefully at the large stones in the ditches or here and there on the roads and in the fields, you find that they are large "clinkers" from the hearth

of the volcano that at some distant time it flung away in an impetuous moment to light wherever the *ingwa* (*karma*) of man or beast or tree took them.

\* \* \*

The summer of 1919 in Japan turned out a particularly wet one. Officially there are twenty days in summer when fine clear weather should be had. But Japan is an island empire, and if the wind happens to get slightly twisted, and comes from the Pacific Ocean, then all official arrangements are set at naught.

Anyhow, a clear morning after a succession of wet ones brought myself and the friends with whom I was holidaying out of our paper-shuttered rooms, and made us lift up our eyes unto the hills and take our feet after them. We made no preparations for weather ; we simply relied on a confident feeling that was in the air ; and for food we placed our faith in an inn that was on the map, and that would, we hoped, still be found on the surface of the earth—though in Japan, and especially within a fairly strong stone's-throw of a volcano, the fixity of an object on a not very new map is not a thing on which to base important calculations.

I have said the day was clear, but that applied only to the world below four thousand feet.

Above that height there was a layer of fleecy white cloud. It came down over Asamayama like a nightcap on the head of a sleeper who had a fiery nightmare, or like a snuffer on a lighted candle whose spark and smoke remained imprisoned within the snuffer. We walked up direct from our village towards the volcano, then skirted the cloud in the hope of its clearing off as the day advanced, or of finding some encouragement for an impromptu visit to the crater.

The first hour of our walk was through forests of small pines, firs and larches, by a footpath that it is as well to go by in daylight. At intervals it loses itself in thick undergrowth, and skirts quaking edges of sudden breaks in the hillside, or crosses the track of a former landslide that may take place again and wipe out the track. Everywhere it is swarming with ants that crowd up human legs and seek places to nip. Afterwards we emerged on a broad cart-road that goes diagonally up the hillside with occasional dips and bends to accommodate itself to lateral valleys that have either been worn down by rivers or fashioned when some ancient subsidence of the earth squeezed the upper crust into sharp heights and hollows.

The road itself was a perpetual reminder of the vast business that must have gone on all over the district in remote ages. It was worn by cart-wheels into deep ruts, and these ruts were in parts black and heavy, being fine cinder worn down by rain and wheels into a paste; in parts they were strewn with what, on a general glance, had the appearance of small white stones, but which on a closer look turned out to be brittle pumice-stone. Both the pumice and the dust were thrown out by Asamayama in ages past,—how long past no one can truly tell, but there was a realisation of antiquity in the sight of immense forests and thick undergrowth on the top of layer upon layer of ash and pumice where a bend of the road had been cut down and exposed a section of the land. A line of pumice in a wavy motion told simultaneously of an ancient eruption and the moulding of the earth's surface. This line was covered with what was probably a layer of volcanic dust that settled down over the heavier materials as they came from the volcano. There were several such successions, and nowhere was there any sure trace of vegetation that would indicate the lapse of long time between the eruptions. Apparently the volcano erupted periodically at intervals not sufficiently long to

permit growth to take place. Then the eruptions ceased, and the present luxurious growth covered over the colossal nightmare of the volcano's fiery youth.

I have written so much above about the volcanic side of things that it may appear that Nature here presents a face of cinder and repulsive violence. But that is not so. The foundations of natural life around Asamayama are volcanic, but they are only disclosed here and there to the observant eye. Somehow or other the sweetness and beauty that are at the heart of the universe will out; and this region of past and present and, doubtless, future catastrophe, is a land of pleasant appearance. The hills, excepting a few peaks, are clad in green to their summits. At intervals along our mountain walk we paused to drink in the beauty of clouds of pink meadow-sweet that fringed the roadsides and stretched as far as they could into the forest shades. Here and there groups of purple iris stood in royal aloofness. In forest clearings yellow lilies rose and waved like exquisite apotheoses of the nether flame, transfigured, purified, and sublimated in its passage through the pores of Earth. White hydrangea bushes and clumps of little michaelmas daisies offered coolness for contrast.

We found the inn. It gave us a boiled egg and a bottle of mineral water each as provender for an eight-hours' tramp ; but mountain air has a nourishment of its own, and we did not miss the grosser elements. When the mind is full, the body is not conscious of emptiness.

The fringe of the cloud drew down until it thickly enveloped the inn. This made an ascent of the volcano proper impossible, and we had to content ourselves with a return walk by a detour through deep descending valleys where stream joined stream and became a river, and river sought river, and all went chanting towards the great culmination of unity in the distant ocean.

\* \* \*

On a subsequent occasion a clear sky and an unusual briskness in the air lured me into an attempt, along with Monsieur Richard, to climb the volcano and look into its ever-active crater. We followed the path of our previous tramp. The crystal clearness of the atmosphere brought the volcano apparently quite near. A short cut through a forest and then a walk up a bare slope seemed to be all that was needed. But one soon learns in the hill country of Japan to distrust visibility and apparent distances, as sailors do at sea. Folds and counter-folds in

the surface of the earth turn what is flat on the map, and short in distance as the crow flies (and by the way there are no crows at Asamayama to fly), into twists and turns that treble or quadruple the distance, and lead to confusion as to direction. So we passed by all temptations in the way of side-paths, and stuck to what we already knew.

The clearness of the atmosphere had also the effect of minimising the feeling of bigness and mystery and threat that is the normal temper of the volcano. In the bright sunlight there was a delightful grouping of tints—green in various shades as the forests gradually thinned out up the slopes, then disappeared, and shrubs and grass continued a gallant effort to carry the obliteration of nature over the shoulders of catastrophe. But the effort failed ; and indeed it would be a pity if the comfortable commonplaceness of vegetation should completely cover that great shoulder, with its strong and graceful curve, and its rich brown tint—a tint that in other latitudes would suggest heather in late autumn, but at Asamayama is the result of the wizardry of distance and atmosphere exercised on great areas of weathered volcanic cinder. The outline of the mountain was sharp against a delicate bright blue sky. The wind carried

the smoke of the crater down over the far side unseen to us. Fleecy white clouds in the upper air completed a wonderful combination of tints—green, brown, blue, white—in perfect harmony, and in great simple full-brush washes.

When we reached the inn that marked the limit of our previous excursion it was midday, and the clouds had drawn together in a way that suggested the overcasting of the summit in the afternoon when the cooling of the atmosphere would condense the water-vapour that is always plentiful in the Japanese sky. Indeed while we enjoyed a light luncheon in the inn (brought by ourselves, for even the egg apiece of the previous time was lacking) the cloud came down as it did before. There is no sense in fumbling about the edge of a crater in a thick cloud that may fill the lungs with sulphur fumes, wet you to the skin and blank out the way—especially if you want to tell about it afterwards. We therefore decided to postpone the climb once more. Instead of ascending the volcano we walked some four miles farther round the slope at the level of the inn (4,500 feet),—and what we saw was quite enough in the way of sensational impression for one day.

We halted on the edge of the scene of the great eruption of a century ago. From the lip of the crater, under a pall of wicked-looking smoke, and among frowning shadows and mists on our side of the mountain, a great dark petrified stream of lava appeared to descend in increasing width. As it approached our point of vantage it thinned out and became mixed up with other materials of volcanic energy—light-coloured pumice, dark cinders, and powdered combinations of each and of both. The country-side from which we viewed it was like a vast series of rapids and whirlpools that had churned themselves and their rocks into an unbridled rage, and then had been stopped suddenly in their frenzy and turned to stone at the gaze of some Gorgon of immensely greater power than themselves. And out of this solidified madness arose the white skeletons of thousands of trees, ghastly and pathetic in their nakedness, like bones that had been gnawed clean in some gigantic and fantastic feast and stuck end upwards in the ground in a freak of colossal derision.

Such was the general impression—a huge elemental gesture of scorn thrown across nature and humanity. But other impressions emerged as the eye and the mind grew accustomed to the

scene—the indomitable will of nature that found spots in the desolation where the aspiration of the pine-tree once again asserted itself in little patches of greenness, and tiny red mosses took up the tale of their evolution in the dusty crevices of big cinders; the indomitable faith of humanity that has set around the slope of the hill the graven images of its belief in Powers behind both the malevolence and beneficence of nature, and on the strength of that faith builds its wooden home, enters life with a cry, and goes through it with a laugh.

\* \* \*

On another occasion we walked across country to an alleged radium spring. The route took us across a number of deep, narrow valleys, our path occasionally running along a ridge only a few yards wide. Here were rapid streams, with cosy wooden houses perched on precipices. Groves of trees sheltered small temples. We turned into a broad and long valley, at one end of which on our left hand Asamayama towered to the sky, and at the other a narrow gorge between high wooded cliffs marked the site of the radium spring. A mountain river rioted along to the gorge. Near the gorge we came upon the tea-house where we were to rest and refresh ourselves. Between

us and it was a bridge—that is to say, a couple of split tree-trunks, narrow, loose, and shaky both vertically and laterally. The Japanese lady member of the party trotted across this earthquaky affair as if it was a broad road. (The Japanese genius can keep its head on a razor's edge over a volcano, and lose it when two-and-two have to be summed up quickly in a street crisis.) Then she returned and gave her hand to the others, who slid across foot by foot. I stuck at the fourth step despite voluminous encouragement. Just under the bridge (and me) the torrent was particularly deep and turbulent, and I have never had a head for tight-rope walking or precipices. Still, I had to get across somehow. I had noticed a possible bridge a mile up the valley, and, for a second, thought of running back to it. But I was not sure that it would serve the purpose, and so, sacrificing grace to necessity, I crawled across the planks arms down, legs in front, like a daddy-long-legs, thanking my stars that the only camera in the party was slung over *my* shoulder.

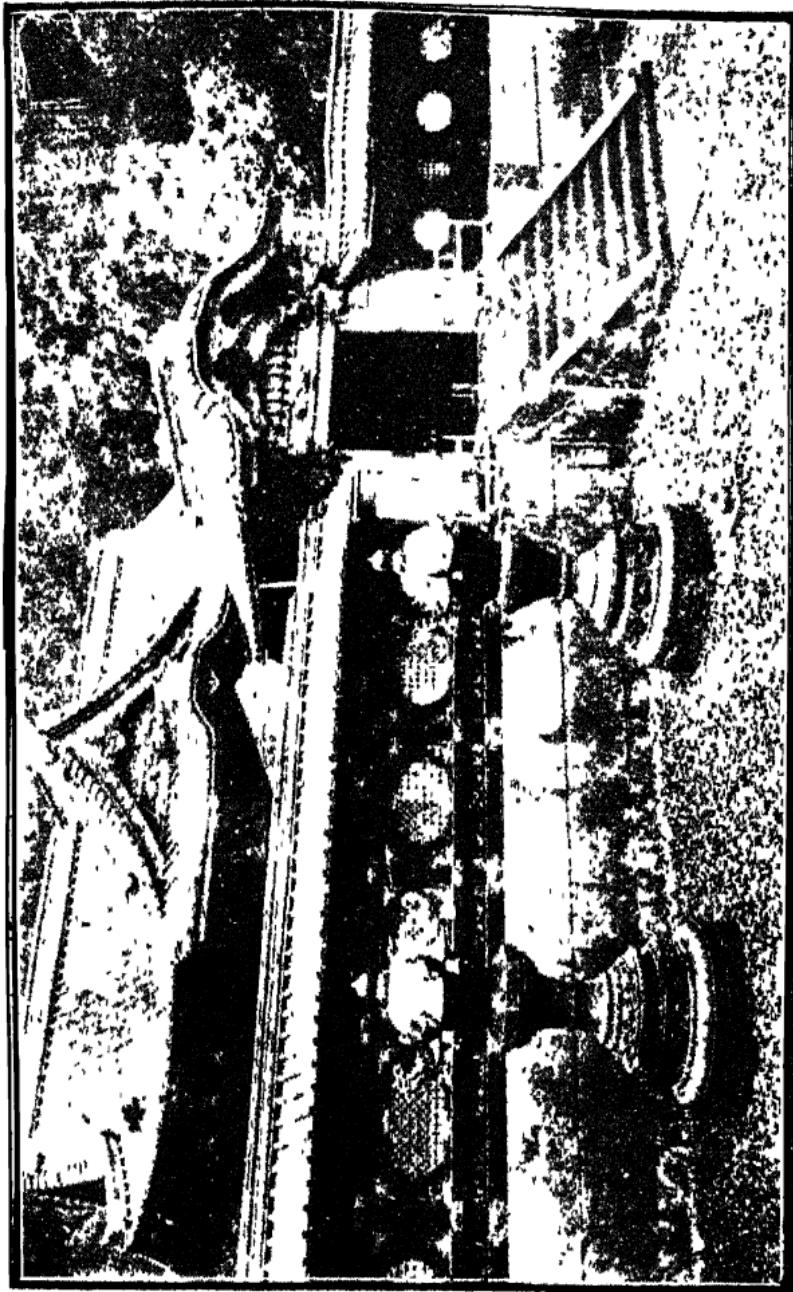
After tea we visited the 'spring'—a trickle of water from a pipe that left a brownish stain on the rock. Farther down the gorge, we were told, there was a fine waterfall. We were not

inclined for further exploration, as we had a long uphill tramp home before us. However, on the assurance of a man attached to the tea-house that it was a *very* fine waterfall, we went, and took him with us for certainty. After a stiff walk on pebbles and slippery bits of cliff for about half a mile, our guide suddenly stopped, and pointed at a place somewhere on the thickly wooded high cliff opposite. Here, we gathered, the famous and very fine waterfall ought to be, but was not. He uttered a guttural 'Ah!' and then exclaimed: "The waterfall *is broke!*"

We got back to Oiwaké just as the first drops of the daily evening deluge fell.

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Frequently my short walks were solitary, and on these occasions of communion with Nature I had the happiness of finding her in those acts of correlation (such as the placing of a tree against the sky, or the touching of a stream by the long finger of a wild flower, or the posing of a water-wheel by a rustic bridge and equally rustic humanity) which send the imagination winging towards the centre of things where all the illusion of separateness in the detail of Nature is resolved into a unity of the spirit. I learned also the knack of the Japanese eye in



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selecting from the flux and multiplicity of Nature those postures and moments on which she has based her art; and in learning this I perceived that the art which bases itself on a momentary posture, runs the risk of becoming a



RUSTIC JAPAN

fixed pose, and of missing the large inspiration and thrill of the ever-moving ocean while contemplating a mouthful of still water in a lacquer bowl.

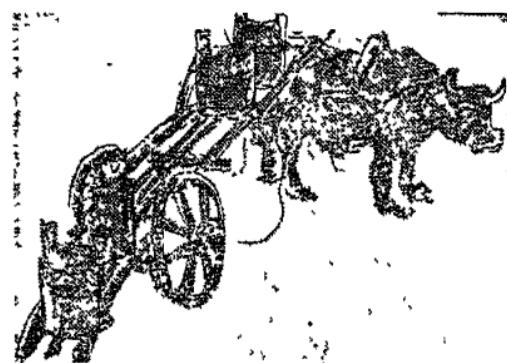
On one of these solitary walks a large dog of the hound species attached himself to me. I had seen him in the village, and learned that his master, a foreign visitor, had left him sick a year before, in the care of a village woman.

He was a noble creature, with great wistfulness in his comprehending eyes. He was obviously in bad health for want of care and food, but probably mostly for want of intelligent and sympathetic comradeship—the deepest need of all creatures, human, canine and otherwise. My heart responded to the suggestions of his nose in my hand, and I yielded myself wholly to his need. I led him by quiet paths between fields where village women were working with their babies fastened on their backs, their sleepy heads dangling from side to side as the mothers moved at their work. We came to a turn in a small stream where the outer bend made sufficient depth for a dog to bathe in, and the inner bend made a clean and comfortable beach of sand for a human being to sit on. Here we had a good time together; and it was delightful to see the gentle creature's spirits and energy increase with the exercise and friendliness. We got back to the village at midday, both very hungry. I gave the dog some food, and told him to go home. During the afternoon he lay about our house, but I could not go out again owing to the rain. He was found dead at the door after sunset—but he had had a good last day.

There was, however, another feature of life in this remote country place which was less pleasant than those which I have already recounted, a feature which, in order to give a true impression of Japan, I must refer to with as much delicacy as I can command (and in spite of the conspiracy of silence regarding it in books on Japan) since it was, and is, common to the entire country. In sanitary method Japan, both urban and rural, is at the same point of evolution as rural France. True, in the matter of personal convenience, Japan brings her beautiful arts in wood and clay to the aid of human needs—but in the matter of disposal she sets against her traditional subtlety in detecting the constituent perfumes in incense a devastating, saturating odour which is as sharp a contradiction as her ungainly telegraph poles in front of an exquisitely roofed shrine. One can, however, turn one's face away from the ugly sight; but there is no escaping from the head-bursting stench of accumulated and fermented ordure which follows a rhythm of intensity from one visit of the scavenger's cart to the next, and percolates through seams and joints and earthquake-cracks to every part of the house, obscuring (for anyone of olfactory sensitiveness)

the beauty of form and colour and arrangement that the eye, if one were all eye, would rejoice in.

At regular intervals the accumulations of domestic night-soil are taken away. This



THE SCAVENGER'S CART

process announces itself to a wide area. At my public lectures in the University hall I have occasionally been forced, rather than smother, to request the closing of the windows on one

side of the hall. These accumulations are taken by carts carrying closed wooden buckets to collecting stations. (The carts, with their costumed drivers and high-saddled horses or cattle are pictures.) In the case of my district in Tokyo, they were transferred to barges on one of the waterways beside Shiba Park and taken to the country for agricultural purposes. In the mountain region local sources of supply are called on. During the season of growth, the farm labourers carry from the reeking pool beside each farm-house two bucketsful of 'fertiliser' slung at the ends of a

bamboo shoulder-pole. With a ladle that one would put into an exhibition of artistic handi-crafts he distributes the stuff to his growing crops, and its fumes to the winds. Our house at Oiwaké was on the leeward side of the fields, and our 'fertilised' morning hours were periods of nasal misery until we made up our minds to accept the inevitable with as little consciousness as possible.

From this feature in Japanese life have arisen two proverbs. One I read in a report of a discussion in the Diet before I knew its full aroma. A General, replying to speeches against militarism, said that he was not aware of any militarist spirit in the army. "No!" retorted a quick-witted Deputy, "as the proverb has it, 'the farmer is no judge of smells'." The other proverb is—"No foreigner eats salad in Japan;" which is not quite true.

In mentioning this matter I am not taking up the attitude of captious criticism or of western hygienic superiority. It is, of course, a simple fact that the evolution of western social organisation has almost eliminated the worst features of sanitation, especially in cities and towns. But there are factors in Japan's problems of which Europe and America as a whole have no conception. An earthquake of

no special severity breaks a canal and cuts off the water-supply of Tokyo, a city of over two million inhabitants. This is not an isolated experience. The earth under the feet of the people of Japan is practically never at rest. There is a perpetual menace of movement against underground piping, and Japan's method of sanitation is a natural adaptation to circumstances. In process of time some material other than friable pottery or breakable metal, some material capable of withstanding the chemical action of sanitary refuse and at the same time capable of adaptation to earth tremors and movements, will be invented, by means of which Japan will be able to solve her problem of sanitation. Her present method raises the psychological question of the development of perception along special lines. There is no doubt as to the phenomenal keenness of the Japanese eye; the Japanese ear is in training; but either the Japanese nose is far back in the scale of evolution—or (it occurs to me) it may be that its normal function has been suspended as a concession to necessity, for I recall the fact that my own nose in its last months in Japan was far less fastidious than in its first. It is just possible that the universal smoking of the worst cigarettes on earth except the French

(Japanese matches and French matches are also equals in badness) has arisen as a kind of prophylactic. I was myself compelled (although a non-smoker) to light a cigarette at certain times and in certain places as a kind of sanitary barrage.

Says Noguchi: "We have a Japanese word, *kusai*, which, though it is too commonplace a word, will be used of art or writing; *kusai* means, 'It smells too strong.'" The word is not inapplicable to other things than art or writing.

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My stay at Oiwaké ended on August 17. Next morning I started for Nikko. Monsieur Richard accompanied me to Takasaki junction where I had to change trains. His farewell words (with a twinkle and a laugh) were:

"You have managed to live with me for a month. You will be able to live with Mr. Speight for three weeks."

I followed his delicate reference to himself. I had felt the power of his masterful personality, and realised that not everyone could live with him unless they were prepared to forego a good deal of their own desire, and take a spectacular interest in a great mind that was almost too exclusively mental. It happened

that my intellectual interests were coincident with Monsieur Richard's as regards their general trend. We differed widely in our methods of thought; but our mutual earnestness enabled us to use our differences for our mutual enrichment and strengthening. I had learned a good deal about Monsieur Richard's influence in Japan. I was aware of his being consulted by persons of eminence on both the conservative and advanced sides of Japanese life, not on details of action but on broad principles of idealism. He was in close contact with several religious leaders. His book, "To Japan," written in French, was translated into Japanese. A copy was accepted by the Emperor, and the book was scattered broadcast in schools and colleges. Another man with the same personal magnitude and opportunity would have inspired a big public movement—or found martyrdom. Monsieur Richard remained an influence with the Japanese, not a power. I began to understand, during my month's intimate association with him at Oiwaké, that his somewhat ineffectual position was due to his temperamental inability to reduce the circumference of his thought to the small dimensions of other people's. Only deep human sympathy makes such pliability possible

—and Monsieur Richard was intellectually sympathetic only at his own high level. The greater circle, with him, did not include the less; rather, it demanded of the less an impossible expansion to its own size. He despised derivativeness; he appreciated originality—and he did not quite escape the natural tendency, in appreciators of originality, to appreciate the originality of their own appreciation of originality. He was ruthless in his thought, and absolute in his demands. I foresaw frustration in these characteristics, and the possible spiritual loneliness of a great soul imprisoned in its own vastness because of its refusal to hold heart-converse with any save Gods.

Though not a literary man in the conventional sense, Monsieur Richard was a fairly voluminous writer. In his days in France he had published several volumes of metaphysical writings. The War had drawn from him a passionate appeal "To the Nations" which had been published in America with a preface by Rabindranath Tagore. Its message appeared to me to be of great importance, and I determined to have the book published in India. This was duly accomplished, though not without some complications in transit at a time

when censorship still put its undiscriminating hand on communications between Japan and India.

My interest in Monsieur Richard's work appeared to stimulate him to new expression. Local geography gave the subject. It happened that Oiwaké was only a few miles from Karuizawa, a hill station which had been for many years the chief summer resort of the Christian missionary population of Japan. It happened also that Monsieur Richard, in his young manhood, had taken holy orders in France, but had preached himself out of his pulpit. His attitude to Karuizawa was therefore somewhat critical, and his criticism began to express itself in epigrammatical form after the manner of Tagore's "Stray Birds." The method was infectious, and I added a few sentences to the small notebook which Monsieur Richard always carried with him. He put his epigrams (he called them 'slogans') into French form, and I turned them into English. This bred a habit of literary partnership, and the 'slogans' grew in number. I suggested some kind of systematic treatment—and out of these circumstances grew one of the most remarkable contributions to the 'higher criticism' of Christianity, "The Scourge of Christ," afterwards published in India.

In these ways I had managed, as Monsieur Richard owned at Takasaki junction, to live with him for a month, and had therefore qualified to live with my next host for three weeks. He gave me to understand that, while I had spoken of holidaying with a volcano, I had really been holidaying with two, and had got through it very well. My success in this respect was contributed to by Madame Richard, who combined the worlds physical and spiritual with perpetual graciousness.

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## CHAPTER IX

### AT ROYAL NIKKO

MR. SPEIGHT met me at Nikko station at 6.30 the same evening (August 18), and took me to his delightful home. The house, as a house, was like most other Japanese houses, and roughly similar in size and disposal of rooms to the house at Oiwaké. But in position it was an æsthetic delight, and in what I may term its mentality it was unique—with the uniqueness of its occupant. It stood on a bank by the side of one of the broad avenues leading to the temples and mausolea of the *shoguns*, sufficiently far and near to give privacy without seclusion. In front, across the avenue, were groups and lines of the tall, strong, feathery cryptomeria, a tree that unites the qualities of the fir and the casuarina. At the back, and the side on which my upstairs room opened, the bank bore thick shrubbery and a grove of light and graceful bamboos. From one of the innumerable

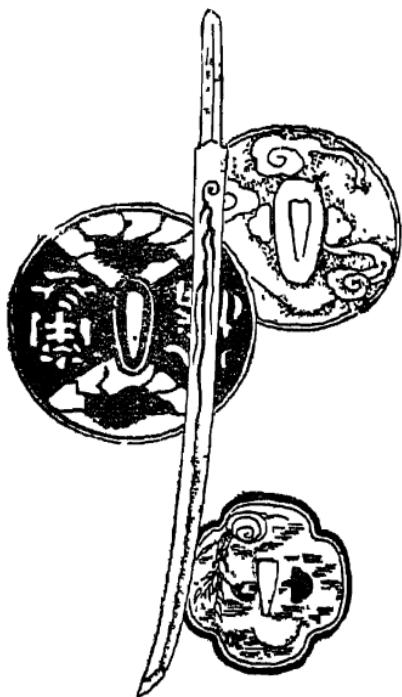
streams that came unceasingly from the surrounding mountains a little runlet crooned into a pool of crystal clearness which reflected the tall beauty of the evening primrose. A wriggly path went up and up to the little house where a little old man lived as guardian over the tombs of past abbots and priests of the temples, and put his forehead to the floor in thanks for whatever came to him after his cup of green tea had been quaffed by thirsty climbers. The verandah of my room looked along the bank and gave me a composite picture of rising ground and trees on my right; on my left the groves in the park between the house and the temples; and in the centre a depression leading to a suggestion of the town, above which soared the mountains, cloud-crested and pine-pinioned.

The change from Oiwaké to Nikko was a change from uncompromising heights to gracious valleys with the heights still in sight; from the exercise and discipline of super-physics to the relaxation and enjoyment of literature and the fine arts. Happily I am mentally amphibious. I find pleasure in the discipline proper to the super-physical life; and I find disciplinary good in the enjoyment of the æsthetical. I suppose it is this amphibiousness that enabled

me to be happy with the simplicities of my life at Oiwaké and with the brilliant French savant who took pride in the freedom of his mind from the intrusion of sentiment; and to turn with equal eagerness towards the poetical Englishman who wept as he read me certain chapters from a novel of his own; and to the feast promised by stacks and rows of the latest books of English verse and *belles lettres* mixed with pieces of delightful Japanese craftsmanship.

My new host was a born collector. Japan is

the country for collectors. You can restrict yourself to fancy envelopes, or cake-box cover-designs at New Year; or you can rise from these applications of art to every day life, through chased sword-guards and dagger-handles that the uglification of modern warfare has released for the service of craft-beauty, to colour-prints that are daily growing in value, and pieces of lacquer each of which would account for a month's salary.



SWORD-GUARDS

Mr. Speight had confined himself to prints, of which he had several thousands, and sword-guards, of which he had several hundreds. He had also collected a fund of information historical and technical which was always at the disposal of ignorant but willing enquirers like myself. He was also (amongst other things) an editor and compiler of educational text-books published in England, and received parcels of the newest and best things in English literature published in England and America. I had ample occasion for reading, as the weather was not suitable for anything but short excursions. Rain fell almost every day, and the saturation of the atmosphere was such that I was more miserable with perspiration when the thermometer was at eighty degrees than in India at a hundred. The 'land of the rising sun' was beginning to feel a misnomer: it was the land of the falling rain.

Such excursions as we were able to make were full of the revelation of natural beauty. The day after my arrival Mr. Speight took me to a tea-house a couple of miles away by roads and paths through luxurious trees (in which the gigantic fly called the *cicada* gave out his reedy *me, me, me, me, meeeee,*) and across foaming rivers by pretty bridges. From this we

tramped uphill to another tea-house at a mountain pass from which we had a wonderful view over an immense tract of country.

A few days later we took an afternoon walk to one of the many waterfalls around Nikko. Part of the fall came down behind a tea-house perched on a rock; the spray from the fall touched us gently as we drank our green tea on the seat on which the Mikado would do the same tomorrow when he visited the fall.

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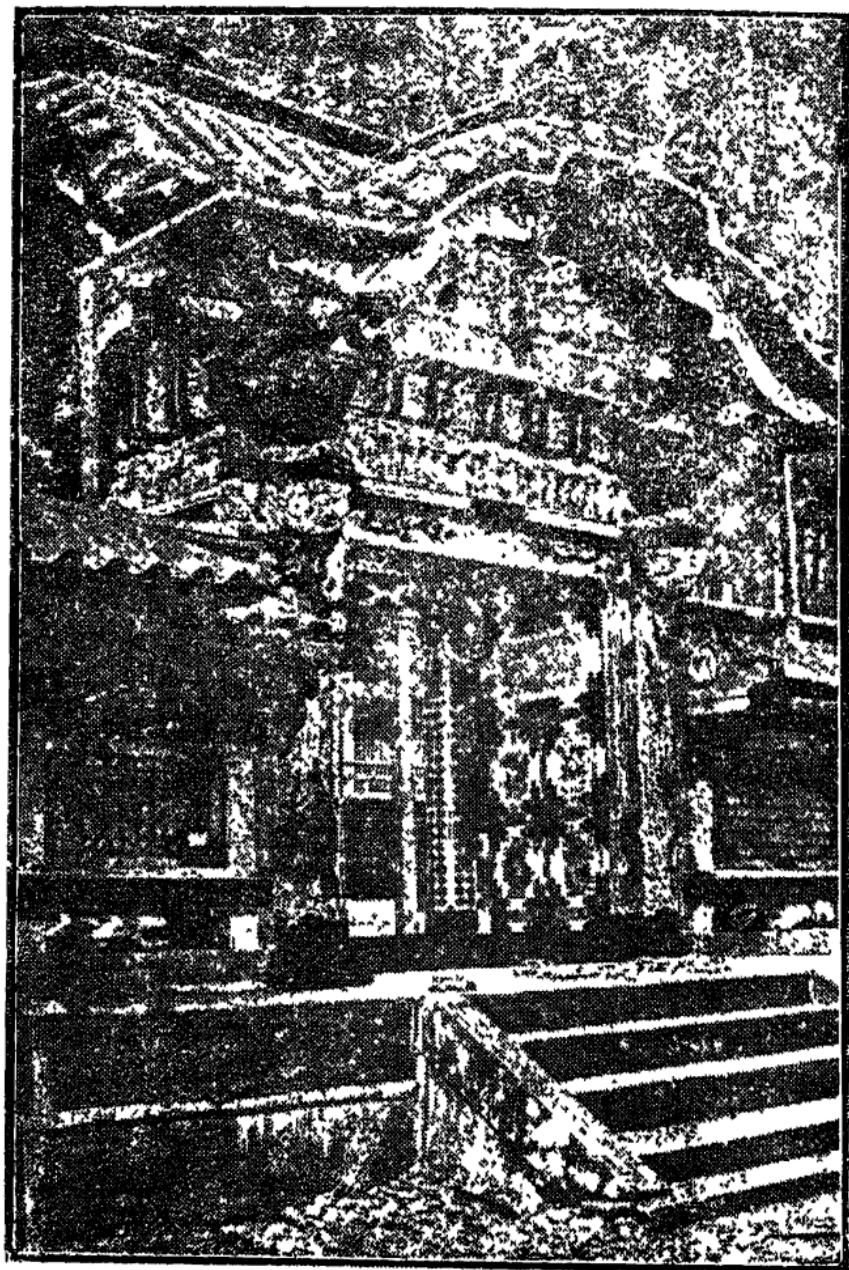
It took me some time to screw my courage up to making a full tour of the historical and artistic edifices that are the main object of the passing visitor to Nikko. I felt that I was not a passing visitor. Hundreds of them shuffled and hopped up and down our avenue daily, all eyes and parcels; but I felt that I (though a foreigner) had the advantage of them (though native) when I roamed after dusk along the deserted cryptomeria avenues, and in and out among the peak-roofed, carved and painted shrines and tombs, under high *torii* and among great stone lanterns, all mellowed in the gathering darkness and overshadowed by tall trees that seemed like ascending exhalations of prayer and benediction. I was glad afterwards, when I made a complete examination of the



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buildings in daylight, that I had with me the twilit background to soften the somewhat garish beauties of a proud, extravagant art. The Tokugawa princes of the seventeenth to the nineteenth century were no niggards in art. As constituents of the Japanese race, they inherited the racial love of beautiful things and the racial intuition as to the juxtaposing of art and nature. As sword-products of the 'people,' they exercised the natural tendency of the lowly to over-expression when they find themselves in the seats of the mighty. If the Japanese (when they are purely themselves) could be vulgar, Nikko would have been a piece of brilliant vulgarity. As it is, the imposition of natural taste on haughty open-handedness has produced one of the most remarkable groups of examples of architecture, carving and colouring in the world, in a natural setting of form and beauty so shrewdly adapted to the works of man that one almost feels as if Nature had moulded herself to the purposes of art. In the *ensemble* Nikko is superb. In artistic detail it is equally superb; but the detail becomes a bewildering weight on the eye; the virtuosity of perfect craftsmanship thrown without stint into the shaping and carving and colouring of almost painfully

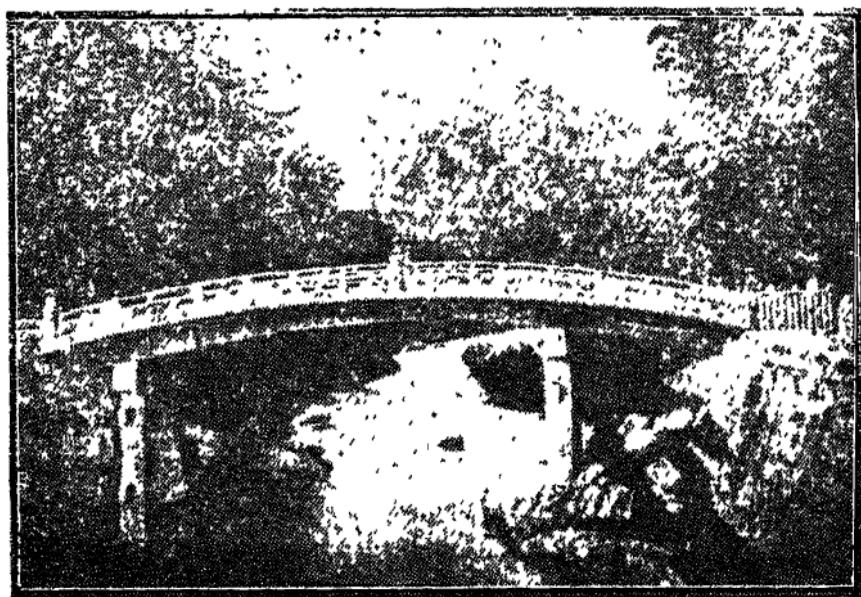


A LACQUERED GATE AT NIKKO

beautiful buildings and gates (whose timbers lend themselves to an elaborateness denied to stone) ultimately dulls one's power of response. One (and I am speaking frankly for only one) carries away the feeling that one has been through a crowded exhibition of the art of Nikko, which was related to Japanese art as a roomful of furniture is to a furnished room. And yet the twilit memory remains; and with it the memory of stone walls and stairs bearing the soft sweet tinctures of weather and moss, leading, by avenues of trees that jetted their almost fluid foliage to the heavens, to a secluded corner where, in a bare plot of earth, with a merely indicative memorial, lies the body of a prince who in life demanded, inspired and supported the arts in their most elaborate and ornate expression, and in death sought only simplicity and silence.

Apart from its historical and artistic associations, Nikko is a royal town. Over the bank from my verandah and round a corner was the Imperial summer villa, and across the road the headquarters of the Imperial bodyguard, who made certain hours of the day hideous with the cries and noises of military drill, and at other hours marched through the lanes and roads singing stimulating choruses. For three weeks I

was almost next door neighbour to the Mikado of Japan. Yet there was nothing specially imposing in the town or its royal residence: both were just Japanese, only, perhaps, a little more so. The long street was an unbroken succession of neat and flourishing shops filled with every kind of allurement to the palate and the desire to possess and have others possess beautiful and dainty things. From the main street little streets ran sideways and up and down as the whim of the crumpled land required—and everywhere along the sides of the streets there was the undertone of the hasty and eager



THE SACRED BRIDGE, NIKKO

conversation of flowing water. At the top of the main street a big river coursed with the energy that comes of contiguity to mountains. This river (along a portion of the bank of which sat a row of stone Buddhas) marked off the town from the historical section. Just where it crosses the main street, and parallel with the public roadway-bridge, it is spanned by 'the sacred bridge,' a red-lacquered, slightly bowed, wooden arch crossed only by the Mikado—not, in my opinion, an artistic success, and too garish in contrast with the browns and greens of the overhanging trees and the grey white of the rushing river; yet always attractive, and in its attractiveness hinting some æsthetic justification beyond my ken.

\* \* \*

Living thus in the neighbourhood of royalty, the chances were that I should come within sight of its physical embodiments—and I did. On August 31, Mr. Speight and I went curio-hunting in a large shop which was selling out. I had just secured a book of fifty-four prints, a first impression of a famous series, when word went round that the Crown Prince would pass in a few minutes to pay his respects to his Imperial father, whose forty-first birthday it was. We took up positions on the footpath

among a quiet crowd of Japanese men and women, in front of whom a line of local school-children formed up, some carrying the Japanese flag with its big solid red corpuscle that Japanese convention calls the rising sun. A number of notabilities and officials moved about with brisk dignity. The equipage of the Prince was simpler than that of many a Tokyo *narrikin* (newly-rich)—a 'Victoria' carriage drawn by a pair of fine horses, with a couple of accompanying carriages. As the Prince passed, the men onlookers raised their hats, and all, men, women and children, bowed—not with a half-grudging bend of the head, but with the generous forty-five degrees bend of the whole body that gives the simple act of greeting in Japan a ceremonial significance.

The Prince himself was one of the least Japanese looking persons of the occasion, as he sat bolt upright in khaki uniform and peaked military cap, hardly distinguishable in general appearance from a young English army officer. There was about him, however, an air of keenness that did not arise only from uniform, but struck me as a natural quality. He neither shrank nor flaunted, but looked about him with the inquisitiveness of a youth of eighteen mixed with a sense of responsibility as heir to an

ancient throne in a modern age. I had but a moment's glance at him, but I felt that he had in him not only the natural strength which belongs to rulership, but a mental resiliency that will stand him and his country in good stead in the rapid and drastic changes which it must share with the changing world.

At night there was a birthday display of fireworks which I have never seen or heard excelled in quantity and quality. A curious feature of the display was the frequent passing of rockets through the low-hanging clouds above which, when they exploded, they made a dull glow and dropped their fragments which suddenly appeared from the darkness as if shaken from the sieve of some gigantic being of the Night.

A few days later (September 5) a policeman called at Mr. Speight's house and informed us that the Emperor would shortly pass, and that all windows must be closed, and we must either stay inside the house or come down to the footpath of the avenue. The cause of this regulation lies far back in mythology, when the Sun Goddess descended to Earth and founded the Nippon dynasty which has remained unbroken for nearly 2,600 years. The Emperor of Japan is therefore not only the

temporal ruler of his people, but the visible image of Deity set in their midst. Around this central point the whole of Japanese life revolves. For centuries the Mikado was a mysterious, remote power, shut in at the heart of the Empire. For a thousand years he was a mere figurehead as far as outward rule was concerned, the affairs of the country being conducted by successive barons (*shoguns*). But the middle of the nineteenth century brought a change, and a great personality through whom the change might be carried forward with the minimum of dislocation—the Emperor Meiji, the spiritual and royal father of modern Japan. The age of feudalism passed away. The age of developing representative government came, with the Mikado at the centre, a constitutional monarch, but still the spiritual head of his people. The veil of mystery was withdrawn; the descendant of the Sun Goddess stood forth in human dignity. He may now be seen of all eyes, even as I, a pilgrim from the extremity of Europe to the extremity of Asia, saw him in a contiguity which it would have been impossible half a century ago to have achieved and survived; but because of his spiritual rank those eyes may look upwards towards him, or on the level, but not downwards. Hence the custom of closing windows.

We changed hastily into our most decent clothing when the policeman gave us his warning, and went down and stood on the path at the foot of the stepping-stones leading down from our house. The equipage of the Emperor of Japan was even less imposing than that of the Crown Prince. A couple of horsemen followed by a closed carriage turned into our avenue. We were doubtful that this was His Imperial Majesty even though the white-gloved, slit-eyed little policeman told us very politely to remove our hats. The carriage came up the steep avenue at a walking pace; and at a considerable distance from us I saw from family likeness, khaki uniform and other indications, that the figure sitting on the near side of the carriage was the Mikado. He passed us a few feet distant, and his eyes met mine as I bowed my respect to the symbol of Japan's spiritual and human ideal.

\* \* \*

On August 25, I was a guest at an "American" tea-party given by a missionary lady, a permanent resident in Nikko, who laid herself out to show hospitality to foreign visitors. There was quite a gathering of interesting looking people present, but I saw no Japanese among the guests, much to my disappointment. All looked American save a lady in Indian (Parsi)

dress, but with a face that never grew on any Indian tree. An elderly gentleman in Japanese dress appeared, but his face would have passed on a dollar over any counter in the United States. I began to wonder if it was the custom to have fancy-dress tea-parties in Japan ; but the process of introduction set me right. The "Indian" lady was the French wife of a Bengali gentleman who, for breaking caste by marrying her, had been excommunicated. In return, he had excommunicated India from his outer life, but spent time and money in the propagation of the Vedantic philosophy. The gentleman in the Japanese dress was Dr. Frederick Starr, Professor of Anthropology at Chicago University, and oriental traveller. Annually for a number of years he had summered in Japan, passing from shrine to shrine collecting the curious and varied votive drawings and paintings which the pious place in the shrines when in need of help from the invisible powers. For this, the American anthropologist had been given the title of *O Fudo Hakasi*—doctor of honourable fudo—*fudo* being the generic term for these votive offerings. Dr. Starr had been so often in Japan, and had so absorbed himself in the study of its humanity, that he carried with him a Japanese wardrobe, and on

arriving at a Japanese port from America, doffed his western clothing and stepped ashore a Japanese. He lived in a Japanese hotel ; detested 'foreigners ;' and would not have come to a gathering of them save under compulsion of our irresistible hostess. Dr. Starr had also visited Korea and written the first account in English of "Korean Buddhism." He had also been shadowed, even to the summit of Fujiyama, by Japanese police, for some reason which only police intelligence could manufacture. The rest of the party, besides Speight, consisted of an American Tokyo professor, an American lady-compiler of school text-books, an American poetess, and an American missionary doctor on his way to China to compound Christian doctrine along with the pharmacopœia. And there was another guest who attracted me, puzzled me, and conquered me.

After tea we were all stage-managed by our hostess into a line seated around the room. The proceedings were to be in the American fashion, not spontaneous and higgledy-piggledy like European parties, but regulated and efficient, each guest contributing in order of place an item of speech or recitation.

In the process of introduction I had not caught the name of the other guest to whom

I have referred, and my fidgetty mind, with its bothering habit of doing several things at a time, engaged itself in what it calls 'psychologising' the stranger. His square clean-shaven face, with fifty years or more in it, might have come out of an Embassy, particularly as it was supported on easy and somewhat masterful manners. But his hands were born and bred for fingering not red-tape but some medium of creation ; they were not diplomatic, but artistic. The tone of his voice was that of a very earnest parson as it came to me in the intervals for conversation between the items ; yet his eye had a non-dogmatic speculation, and a swivel motion that suggested the platform rather than the pulpit. I had just got to the point of settling him as a musical instrumentalist when the chairman called on 'Mr. Henry Eichheim' for his item. Then I knew where I was. Mr. Eichheim had been a violinist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra for a quarter of a century, and was a soloist and composer of great distinction. He had retired, and with his wife, an excellent pianist, was travelling in the East (as I had learned from the papers) studying oriental music and occasionally playing to help worthy causes. His 'turn' took the form of a short and earnest speech on his

interest in the music of Asia ; and a reference to India drew me to him after the party, and began for me that purest of human experiences short of true marriage, a perfect friendship.

\* \* \*

For the next few days, Nikko, to Speight and myself, meant the Eichheims. First, I had tea with them at their hotel on the high bank over the sacred bridge, when we discovered that our mutual interests and temperaments were such as to cause us to wonder why we had not met before. Then they tea-d at our house, and enjoyed its natural beauty and its mixture of Japan and English literature. Our conversation turned mainly to music. It interested me to see with what warmth and assurance I had accepted Mr. Eichheim as a master-musician without hearing a note from him, and left the future to justify my intuition. I gathered that through contact with the music of the East he had realised that there was a world of musical science and of æsthetical experience of which Western music had never dreamed ; and he had taken upon himself the work of trying to make a bridge between East and West by acquiring as much as he could of eastern musical material and presenting it to the West in a form that would make its

extraordinary richness in melody and rhythm assimilable by ears accustomed to the restricted keys and times of western music. This struck me as a curiously complementary movement to the Japanese swing towards western music. It happened that my wife was deeply interested in precisely the same work as regards the music of India. Technically I could not discuss the matter, though my head was full of Indian tunes, memories of numerous mornings at my College in South India when my students and I dedicated our day's work to the Highest, in Tagore's "Morning Song of India," and sang Kanarese or Tamil or Telugu songs of devotion under our tall bodi-tree before parting for the night. Eichheim glowed with the enthusiasm of the artist who has become discoverer: I thrilled to the vision of a world unified and sweetened by the flowing and inter-flowing of the tides and winds of beauty and the disinterested joy which only the free circulation of artistic culture can give.

After tea we sauntered among the shrines and on to their hotel. It was our intention to part with them at the hotel entrance, but Mrs. Eichheim (perhaps 'sensing' musical hunger in Speight and me) suddenly said we must come in, and, although the hotel piano was not much

to boast of for accompanying a violin, she would do her best with it, and Mr. Eichheim would play something for us. The first touch of bow on fiddle justified me. Here was a master of music, a revealer of the beautiful soul of sound, who poured forth for the enrichment of two musically hungry human beings a big portion of the contents of his treasury ; and not only for us two highly favoured mortals, but for the crowd of holiday-makers in the hotel who gathered into the general room and adjacent places, and had a feast of music that seldom comes the way of such at close quarters. On our way home Speight and I said nothing to one another—which, for us, was saying a great deal.

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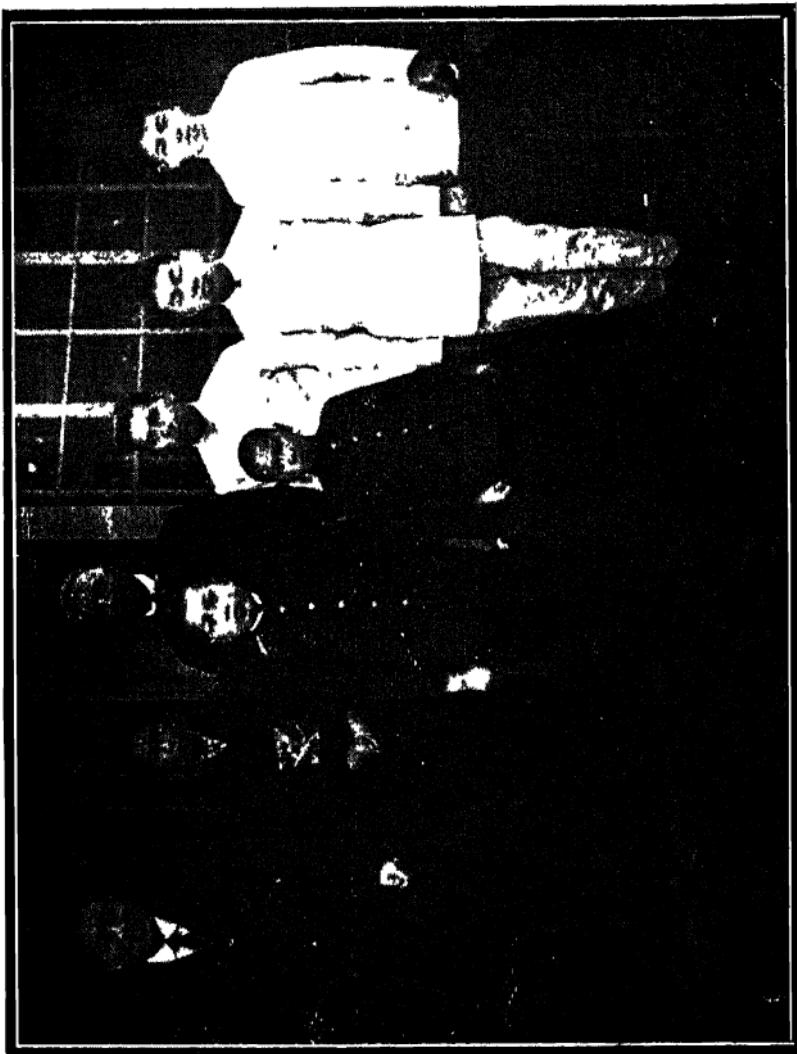
I made another tour of the Nikko temples on August 30. Aided by Speight's knowledge of Japanese and friendship with the temple priests, we saw everything that was worth while inside as well as outside. But while again I made obeisance to extraordinary craftsmanship and certain ways of doing and placing things which from long practice had become beautiful tricks, I missed the sense of the deeper life that one gets in Indian sacred edifices. I knelt with a pious crowd on the floor of

one of the temples and listened to a priest chanting with a fascinating up and down intonation. I enquired as to the substance of the chant, and learned that he was informing the pilgrims as to the dimensions and cost of the building. The item seemed to me to be typical of the objective nature of the Japanese mind, typical also of the wonderful way in which the simple recounting of dull details can be made artistic.

\* \* \*

I packed up and sent off my heavy luggage to Tokyo on September 6, and that evening, as a grand finale to my stay at royal and beautiful Nikko, walked with Speight to a village some two miles and a half away to see a country festival. In India a 'festival' means a function with religion as its central attraction and all-pervading atmosphere, but with variety of activities and means of enjoyment. But this festival, if it had any connection with religion, kept it modestly out of sight, and set its enjoyment to the eternally repeated rhythm of a drum. It was dark when we reached the place of festival, but the scene was brilliantly lighted by converging lines of colour-ed electric lights carried from the sides of a pond to the top of a tall pole like the ropes in

A JAPANESE WORKING-CLASS GROUP—PAGE 179





*kollatam* or the maypole dance. In the middle of the pond there was a two-storeyed wooden pavilion which was linked to the sides of the pond by a wooden bridge. On the top storey of the pavilion a man, in shirt sleeves, with a pair of heavy drumsticks beat on a large drum a continuous, simple and emphatic rhythm. This was the pulsating heart of the festival. To the beat of the drum several hundreds of young men and women moved from side to side and in a slow progression round the margin of the pond and across the bridge. The dancers were dressed in all sorts of grotesque costumes—some as birds, some as beasts, some as pierrots, some as European dandies. To the uninitiated eye and uninformed mind there did not appear to be any particular pattern or order in the performance. Dancers joined and left the ranks at any point at any time. There was no change in the drum-rhythm, and not a second's pause while a tired drummer gave place to a fresh one. The multi-dressed personalities moved with evident though restrained enjoyment and with unbroken decorum to the unceasing beat of that central heart. I grew tired shortly of the monotony of sound and movement and went home; but I knew that where there is joy there is justification, and a possible ecstasy of repetition.

that my western training and vehicle was not capable of registering.

That night I dreamed (apropos of nothing that I could recall in my waking life) of a number of people, including myself, walking on a row of stepping-stones (such as are in every Japanese garden) with deep water between. I was very nervous, and while we were engaged in the effort, two big waves, the second smaller than the first, came rolling up, towered over our heads, and broke on us in rapid succession. A few days later my dream fulfilled itself.

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## CHAPTER X

### A DOMESTIC EPISODE: PART 2

THERE is in holiday-making, especially when one leads the balloon-like life of a guest, attached to reality by a thread, an irresponsibility and absence of challenge that ultimately (in my case, in three weeks) cease to give enjoyment. I had received so much, and given so little, that I was surprised, and glad, and surprised to find myself glad, to see the friendly face of the cook at Tamachi station on my return from Nikko (September 7). There was a touch of 'the daily round' about its rotund smile that brought me back with a sense of pleasure to life's stabilities. He had about him a suggestion of meal-times and a consequent time-table of study and teaching in between, that make a regular and undeniable demand on one's attention. It was nine o'clock at night when I arrived. The streets were lit with lanterns and thronged with people celebrating the annual festival of the district of Mita in which Keio University is

situated. There was something almost frightening in suddenly finding myself in the midst of a big vortex of life so different from the almost secluded, the highly specialised, life of the past seven weeks, in which I had been *in* Japan, but hardly *of* it. Here, at the corner of a side street and *Keio mae*, I was jammed in a crowd of cheerful people trying to purchase dainties for a moment's pleasure, or knick-nacks for a month's, at booths set up temporarily on the kerb and lit by large paper electric lanterns bearing a black device on a red ground and disposed as pleased the taste of the busy but ever polite stall-keeper. The general air of purchasing took hold of me too. I remembered the two sons of *Cook san*—and acted accordingly. I remembered also the infant whose advent two months previously to become one of this happy, simple, sober, proliferating mass, had lost me three hours and forty minutes' sleep—and acted accordingly also; that is to say, I concluded that cooked and candied mysteries were beyond the comprehension of a digestive apparatus which had had less than two months' practice in adjusting its tastes and abilities to the elaborate and attractive scheme of self-poisoning that humanity calls dietetics. Instead, when we had wriggled ourselves out of the

stream of *Keio mae* into the quiet backwater of the entrance to the University, I inquired how the new son was getting along, and was sorry to hear (through gesticulation) that he was not as healthy as he should be. My interest in him was rewarded next morning by a private view, and the view sent a pang of compassion for the parents through me—for I saw (as I thought) death in the peaked, dull face, and I knew that, however people may talk of Japan's being ruled by the dead (the ancestors), it is most assuredly ruled by the child.

Two nights later I found it impossible to get to sleep. I am sensitive to influences subtler than those that reach the consciousness by the five senses, and something pending disturbed me. By and by, in the room across the fish-pond, a few feet away from mine, the child began to cry. Then something took place that seemed to alarm the mother. There were calls for one of the attendants, a hasty exit, the coming of the same medicinal voice as came two months before, another exit; then a period of hysterical sobbing, appealing, laughing, coaxing, and again sobbing—the uncontrolled agony of a mother facing the threat of the loss of the life that she had risked her own to bring into the world, and the deep but helpless comforting of a

stricken husband and father. At two o'clock in the morning (I could see my watch by their light as the night was warm and the *shoji* were open) there was a climax of lamentation. I looked from my open *shoji* into their room. The mother and father were on their knees on the floor swaying over the little form in a mutual outburst of grief. The child was dead. Then came a long diminuendo of lamentation, and later the quietness of exhaustion. There was nothing for me (a stranger to their life and ways, and cut off by the barrier of speech) to do but take to the universal language of consoling and strengthening thought for the two good bereaved souls, and marvel at the turn in my pilgrimage that had brought me so close to life's entrance and exit in a distant land. The wheel had come full circle—and I fell asleep from four o'clock to six.

The next day (September 10) was one of heavy rain that turned the garden into a quagmire, and left the stepping-stones the sole passage to and fro. I could pass along the cook's verandah and out through the club, but the event of death and the funeral of the baby brought many visitors, and I took the outer way. College classes were not to open until the following day, and I took advantage of the freedom to go

into the city on business in the afternoon. I found it somewhat difficult to move in my goloshes from stone to stone without slipping. When I got round to the front of the club there was a small crowd of the cook's relations and friends in the entrance. I paused for a moment to express my sympathy with some of them, when a stretcher was wheeled out bearing the mother, her eyes closed, her face ash-white. For a moment I thought she too was dead, but my intuition gathered that she was being taken to hospital, broken with grief. Then my dream of stepping-stones and rain and two large waves, the second smaller than the first, recurred to me. . . .

When I returned from the city I passed by the cook's *shoji*. I came silently in my rubber overshoes, and inadvertently saw a man with eyes and hands lifted to heaven in an agony of sorrow and supplication. Before I could pass (pretending that I had seen nothing) he turned to me the cook's face with its rotund smile—but not quickly enough to conceal from me the effort that it cost him to follow the tradition of his race and keep his feelings locked in his own bosom. I found means to express my deep brotherly sympathy with him, and gave my contribution of 'incense money'.

Thereafter came a period of ceremonial in which my room, because of its contiguity to the room in which the death had occurred, had its share of purification. A small, unintelligent looking, elaborately robed priest went round my room, uttering phrases that I knew not, and sweeping the air in all directions with a kind of besom of paper strips. I stood silently and in an attitude of respect in a corner,—



PRIESTS

and wanted to know (but could not ask) what the ceremony meant. I spoke later to some Japanese religious leaders of a philosophical turn—but their only contribution to my knowledge was a confirmation of the statement of Cicero to the effect that those who follow after philosophy do not worship gods. It seems a pity that in Japan, as elsewhere, there is a gulf between the superphysical and the metaphysical; that devotion eschews rational thought, and thought contemns devotion. There is a wider view, but few there be who take it.

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## CHAPTER XI

### LIFE IN A UNIVERSITY

MY diary for many days in September, 1919, contains the word 'wet'; sometimes the phrase 'wet all day' (a phrase with a grudge in it apparently); occasionally 'deluge'. A visitor to Ireland once complained that it had no climate—only weather. Japan has been called by flatterers the Britain of the East, by herself the Italy of the East, by critics the Germany of the East. For myself, I declare that, climatically, Japan is the Ircland of the East—only worse: she has no climate—only weather. That is why Japanese guide-books and articles in travel-magazines speak of 'the glorious climate of Japan,' and believe it. There are two psychological reasons for this curiosity of literature; one, that you can only live with a disagreeable thing by making a virtue of a necessity, and adoring it. The other reason is that the Japanese climate *is* glorious—in parts, like a certain celebrated egg. In the midst of periods of rain

and cloud, and a saturation that gets to your spiritual bones and makes you think that, after all, there was something in the pessimistic philosophers, come breaks of sunshine of entrancing preciousness in warmth and colour. These breaks are no more calorifically or pigmentally fine than the weather of other parts of the world, but the contrast sets out all their quality ; they are circumscribed to an intensity that penetrates into the consciousness. The open wind will pass us by without leaving a finger-print, but a breath through a clink may whistle the call of death. The long-spell sunshine of South India pervades one like a golden presence that may be left with assurance to its own devices ; the cloud-curtains of Japan hide away the sun like a God (or, more correctly in Japan, a Goddess) beyond the danger of common-placeness or inattentive acceptance.

At times, however, the cloud-curtains are pulled aside to stir the heart and soul with the revelation of a perfect hour. I sat one day, during the period of rain of which I am now speaking, in my room trying to precipitate my mind beyond the devastating loneliness of darkness and deluge. Towards nightfall there came a lull in the gossiping voices of water on my roof. I was sitting on my floor gazing

listlessly into the dripping and deepening gloom of my garden, when suddenly something sprang on my sight, like a vision from nowhere, with the poignant challenge of beauty and mystery. It lasted for but a moment, and when it faded, it left me in outer darkness, but with a new inner illumination on the nature of the wonderful people among whom my lot was cast, and the intimacy of their art (despite what outsiders call its merely decorative and conventional character) with those moments of revelation of what Noguchi calls Nature's uniqueness. My vision of beauty and mystery was but the breaking of one spear of light on the shield of darkness. The setting sun, through a slit in the lower edge of the pall of cloud, had sent a fleeting, level ray, that shredded itself through a branch of a tree and perished in a living design of gold on the black background of a wooden wall. I had in the days of my darkness thought of the black-and-gold of Japanese vases as a successful arbitrary stroke of Japanese artistic peculiarity; I knew it now to be a simple realistic seizure of a moment's design from the loom of light and darkness. Was not Rikiu, the sixteenth century tea-master, but acting as true brother of the cloud on the sun, when he banished all the morning-glories from his

garden in order that his lord, when he came for his morning cup of tea, might behold with perfect, single, uninterrupted sight the simple beauty of a solitary morning-glory on the *tokonoma*, set there in the very abandon of reserve ?

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When I first took up my abode in my Japanese room I revelled in its secluded and æsthetical quietness. There always came upon me some sense of cloistral repose and concentration when I removed my street boots on the platform and put on my noiseless indoor slippers, and sat down on my *zabuton* beside the foot-high 'table' that held the books and papers of immediate interest or need. The world of to-day was shut out. I was alone with a world of ancient ease and leisured culture. In the evocation of this world a trifle had taken a larger part than I had realised. In the centre of my room was a separately matted piece about eighteen inches square. This covered a depression in the floor in which tea had been prepared for the visitors of the President of the University when he had used the room. In some hazily pleasant way of the imagination I

ON THE TOKONOMA



had linked this function up with the whole history of Japanese courtesy. The ghostly hierarchy of dead tea-masters seemed to hover around the place. I felt myself in some dim way the heir to their tradition of hospitality, though as yet I had no guests and knew not how to brew *o cha*. When I returned from my vacation (with mind enriched and sensibility quickened) I was shocked to realise that I had, during my previous term of residence, done dishonour to this almost sacred spot in the home-temple of Japan by setting my large table right over it, so that, when I sat at the table, I presented to the tea-master's shrine the soles of my feet instead of my forehead, an offence comparable to that in India of sitting on the culture Goddess, Saraswati, in the form of a book or newspaper. On realising my fault I removed the table to a corner of the room—and in doing so discovered that at least half of my fault should be borne by the new Japan which had fixed an electric bulb in the centre of the room, and by this had determined the position of the table. I removed the bulb also.

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But it was not long before I began to find that the quietness of my Japanese home was

a thing of the past. The summer session of the University had found relief for the elasticity of growing life in outdoor ways. The coming of autumn (and the 'wet' records in my diary) drove life indoors. The club-room, whose windows were ten feet from mine across the fish-pond, became more and more the after-lecture haunt of groups of students, and the meeting-place of the numerous University societies. Residential life is discouraged in Japan by the unwieldy numbers in the Universities who come from homes within easy distance by tram and train. The meetings of the societies had, in consequence, to act as substitute for 'university life' and to be social as well as academical. A large meeting in one of the lecture-rooms would adjourn to the *banraisha* for tea and amusements; a small meeting would take all together in the club-room. As the term progressed, these functions became more frequent, till at times there were two in sequence from four o'clock to seven and seven to eleven. Occasionally there were two simultaneously, one in the European dining-room, the other in the Japanese room. When the speeches were in Japanese (and made no appeal to my attention because of my ignorance of the language) I could proceed with my

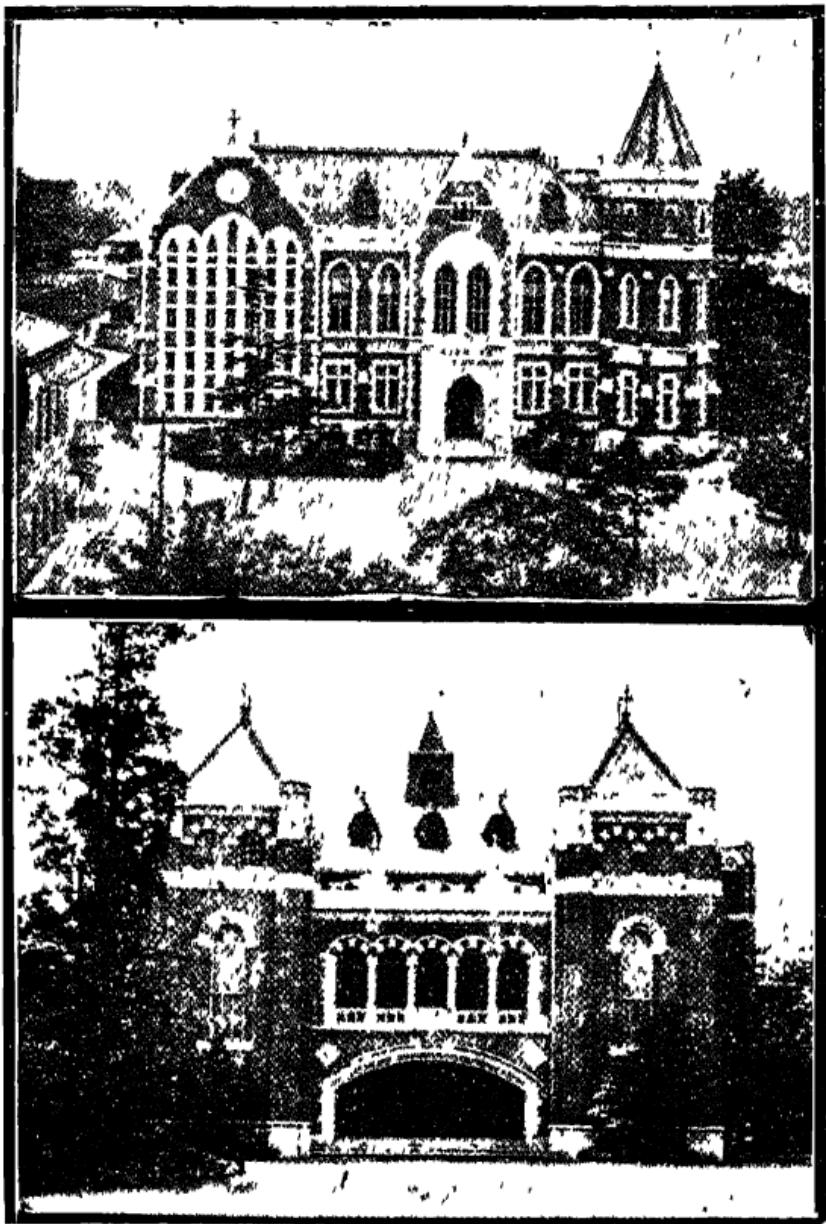
study and writing by figuring myself as a cave-dweller on the edge of a sea of sound. But meetings at which amazing English was spoken shattered my imaginative protection ; and when a lady came to teach table manners to a class in the most disastrous nasal twang, I fled—and found a corner on the top storey of the library in the company of thousands of books whose silence was as compressed speech. Here the only sound that reached me, out of the life of the new Japan that pulsated under the vast sea of dull wave-like roofs below me, was the hoot and rumble of a motor wagon and the clang and rush of an electric tram.

The additional activity in the club-rooms naturally caused additional activity in the cook's department. Clearing-up operations after night meetings dragged out to midnight and later. This made inroads on the hours for sleep. A further deduction was made at the waking end by an elderly couple who took up residence in an extension of the building behind my room on the side opposite the cook's room. These good people ended their day about seven o'clock and began the next at a proportionately early hour. Somewhere between three and four in the morning I became sleepily aware of a conversational duet (male and female) which

occasionally, from a lengthened spell of the female voice, assumed in my brain the character of a Japanese translation of the Caudle Curtain Lectures. At four-thirty there was a movement, and half an hour later the universal first domestic sound in Japan, the *flup, flup, flup* of a duster on the wooden strips of the *shoji*. This, I deduced from certain observations of custom and some experience of masculine human nature, was the feminine element awake and rampant. My salient of quiet was attacked on three sides.

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The deductions from my hours of sleep to which I have referred, necessitated a thorough rest between the midday meal and afternoon engagements. Sometimes I slept; sometimes, because of disturbance outside, merely rested my body and mind. Part of my means of repose was the letting of my eyes wander through the wonderful, beautiful graining of the ceiling-planks of my room. One of the perpetual delights of Japanese houses lies in nature's variations of form and line in the timbers, which the Japanese, with infallible artistic truth, leave perfectly to their own expression of beauty with no vulgar disguise of stain or paint. Here one touches (I fancied in moments of quiet rumination on my floor) a point at which the Japanese



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*Kiogijuku Library*

*Kiogijuku Auditorium*



genius finds the satisfaction of variety which appears to be a fundamental and universal human need. On the surface there appears to be a sameness in Japanese artistic expression. "See one Japanese house, and you have seen the whole of Japan," is a frequent foreign expression. But Japan is superficially monotonous only to those who look superficially on Japan. She does not seek variety in *form*, but *within* form. She may build her houses to a scheduled number of mats for certain rooms (ten mats to a guest-room, say, and four and a half to the tea-room where such is included), but each reed-mat will have an individual touch and tint of nature, and each unpolished board in the ceiling will be different from one another and from every other board between Sakhalin and Formosa, even as were the eye-alluring boards of mine.

But "every plank has two sides". I put this phrase in inverted commas because it feels as if it needed them. It is not a popular proverb,—at least not yet; but the truth involved in it attained proverbial force in my mind when the shortening of the days shut out my ceiling designs in the gloom above the screen of my electric bulb, and developed strange happenings in the unexplored region between ceiling and

roof. Occasionally during my concentration in reading or writing I became aware of ghostly footsteps above my head, but they had vanished with a scurry and a little shriek of fairy laughter (fairies naturally in an Irish imagination) before I could loosen my senses from their inner preoccupation. One day the shadow of a rat climbing up the water-vent in a space outside the back window of my room chased my fairies; and thereafter I became eavesdropper to rodent disputations carried nightly from the rudimentary and cooling drainage system of the College compound to the balmy heights of my roof-space and appetising contiguity to the kitchen. The student societies of the rat-university turned the Great Beyond of my ceiling into not only a *banraisha* but an athletic ground for the playing of baseball and the holding of race tournaments that always ended in quarrels over scores and what seemed to be the chasing and mauling of the referee. I could never determine, however, whether the Great Beyond was adopted as a permanent winter hostel or only a casual, though regular, club-room. By and by it took on a haunting sinister character—as of a city of refuge that belied itself and became a shambles. The scamperings became more serious; sounds of

fear came into them ; a heavier form seemed to be behind them. Then came a pause in the race, a struggle, squealings that diminished into a smother, and the dreadful breathing silence around a ferret and its dying prey. Happily this occurrence had not the daily regularity of man's slaughter-houses, and this and the more sportive occasions usually took up an hour after sunset when, if I found myself unable to fix my mind on work, I could make a sortie into the intense human life that murmured like a sea around the base of my hill-top habitation.

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On some such occasion I carried back to my room the eye-explanation of certain sounds that, by day or by night, had attracted me by their sweetness or rhythm, but disturbed me because I did not know their cause or purpose. A shrilly-piped phrase, never-changing and eternally repeated, is apt to get on one's nerves as a disembodied, irresponsible sound ; but when one knows how it is produced, and why, when it is incarnated in human necessity, it takes its place among the inevitable things of environment, and disturbs no more. I was glad, therefore, one evening (when I had escaped from "Nature red in tooth and claw") to collide in a crowded and muddy street with one

of my disturbing sounds. A blind man, in motley dress, led by a dog, put to his lips at regular intervals a small wooden, double-barrelled whistle, and gave forth the thin, pleading tone and little melody that had often got entangled in my rhymes in the small room up yonder above the hill-side shrubs and among the trees on Keio hill-top. I asked a passing student what the blind man was. I had a vague fear that he was going to tell me that he was the Japanese version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin (I was sick of rats): but he did not; he was a wandering masseur; his pipe was to him as the pole (even in Japan) to the barber. Japan sees to it that her blind citizens are taught useful occupations: massage is one of them, for the humidity of Japan breeds rheumatism; music is another.

Later that night (or perhaps on another night) I laid another ear-ghost. I had frequently been wakened, sometimes several times, during the night by a rhythmical whacking on what seemed to be two sticks, that came in an irregular line of approach from a distance, and died away on the opposite side. At first I thought it was a Japanese way of announcing the hours, for it wakened me most fully between two and three in the morning, and its

2—3 rhythm (*whack whack*; *whack whack whack*) seemed to be connected with the hour—though I could not quite grasp the Japanese idea of wakening people to tell them the time o' night. There were, of course, persons to whom such information might be useful—revellers in distant restaurants whom the quiet of night brought near, with the plucked accompaniment of the *samisen* to ready *geisha* singing and the *saké*-fuddled voices of applauding men. But these were abnormalities, and nations set their regulations to the normal. I gave up the alarm-clock theory when it sounded 2—3 at ten o'clock, and attributed the phenomenon to some religious ceremonial, probably a funeral. By day I was too much occupied to remember to ask about these things. My life progressed in slabs of daylight and darkness. One day, however, an accidental sound in the dining-room brought the 2—3 whack of night to my ears, and I asked my neighbour at table (a son of an English father and a Japanese mother) what it was. "That," he said with a smile and a touch of irony, "is the night watchman warning thieves that he is coming, so that they may get round the corner." On the night to which I have been referring (or the other one) I heard the *whack whack* approaching me by zig-zag

side lanes off the main street. In a moment it emerged on two bare legs surmounted by a heavily wrapped body and head. On the left arm hung a paper lantern with burning candle. The left hand held a piece of wood on which the right energetically with a similar piece of wood gave out a *rap rap* that at close quarters made an almost painfully sharp assault on the ear. These associations of sight with sound gave body and reason to the former disembodied disturbances, and I slept happy ever after.

There was one sound (or, rather, concatenation of sounds) that came to me one night at this time with a queer shock of surprise mixed with a pathos suddenly precipitated out of the memories of my boyhood and young manhood —the sound of men's voices in four-part harmony rising and falling with that richness of emotion that is foreign to oriental music. Somewhere on the College compound a choir of male voices was rehearsing mid-European part-songs. I sallied forth in search of it, and, like Christopher Columbus who set out to discover Japan and collided with America, I found more than I had bargained for; to wit, not a mere group of male singers, but the first rehearsal of the Keiogjuku University Wagner Society for

its twenty-ninth annual concert of European vocal and instrumental music. I promptly joined the society, and attended a number of rehearsals, and so added considerably to my knowledge of modern German choral music. I added also to my realisation of the extraordinary musical evolution of Japan. Here was a large society of young men with well-trained voices of good tone and considerable power, enjoying the mastering of pieces of beautiful vocal music with as much enthusiasm as any choral society I had known in Ireland or England, and a finer æsthetical sensitiveness.

My interest in the Wagner Society naturally spread to similar interests outside Keio. I became aware of the work of the official Academy of Music at Ueno, and in due course received an invitation to a concert of the professors and students of the Academy. This concert was held in a large private hall built by Marquis Tokugawa, adjoining his Tokyo mansion, for the encouragement of musical development. My ticket was sent to me by his son, the Honourable R. Tokugawa. This young scion of the last princely dynasty of Japan received his guests with hearty dignity at the door of the hall. I was introduced to him by a musical friend, and was very pleasantly impressed by

him and his sense of self-dedication of high position to a cultural purpose—though there was a jar of incongruity in his perfect European get-up by the side of his wife (a princess) in exquisite Japanese costume. The hall was filled with the *elite* of the metropolis—which sounds like a newspaper report, but is true nevertheless. One of the princes of the blood royal was present. The programme of orchestral and choral music was as choice as any western connoisseur could wish for. But it was the massed singing of the large choir of little Japanese ladies, daintily but soberly clad in brown, and of smart Japanese men, that moved me to something ridiculously approaching tears. Their vocal quality was excellent; they sang with flawless technique and fine and mobile feeling; but my upsurge of emotion came from some region deeper than the æsthetical, and brought with it the deep, solemn, soul-thrilling vibration of a unity of the spirit, beyond racial and expressional limitations, towards which humanity is feeling—blindly and tortuously through the co-operative antagonisms of political and commercial interests; surely, swiftly and with joy, through the grand unification of culture and the arts.

The academical side of my university life proceeded *pari passu* with these variations and divagations. Daily a few minutes before eight o'clock I greeted my colleagues in the professors' room before we separated, on the stroke of the gong, to our lecture-rooms. Daily I lunched in the club-room with as many of them as came there. Among the Japanese professors my circle of acquaintances remained small. Certain of them were affable in manner and free in mind. Others kept me at the far frigid end of a formal bow, whether deliberately or from shyness I could not determine. Among themselves they were almost uproariously loquacious, and laughed immoderately. The foreign professors were free and friendly with me, but it was difficult to get deeper in conversation with them than rates of salary and the possibility of a better job or an additional one. I found that it was quite understood that a man could teach in as many colleges and schools as he could fit into his waking hours; and I had a feeling of being put in the column headed 'quixotic' in certain mental catalogues when I put aside certain offers in this direction on the ground that I meant to remain loyal to Keio. There was no such thing as 'loyalty' involved; and I suppose it was this recognised absence of

pride in one's university that led to a collateral lack of *esprit de corps* especially among the foreign members of the staff. I noticed that at university functions they were conspicuous by their absence; and I remarked also that I had never been invited to the home of any of them except a bachelor professor's quarters—not, I believe, because of any personal aloofness on either side, but simply because there was no central association of collegiate interests with its natural overflow into social inter-relationships. Part of this state of affairs (so harmful to real education) was an uncertainty as to tenure which was growing among the foreign teaching population in Japan.

My own class-work went on regularly through the courses laid down for the various grades. It remained verbal and expository: there was no intuitive spring or discovery. Still, I felt that my students enjoyed their work and liked me; and even if our studies lacked originality or depth, my own inborn enthusiasm for literature, and my personal acquaintance with some of the poets whose works we studied, made my classes different from what they might otherwise have been. Those students who were themselves of a literary bent kept close to me, and made

my quarters what one of them called 'a very memorial room'. Among the students in the large classes of the commercial section which I took, there were a couple who attached themselves to me, but I lost certainty that their friendship was quite disinterested. I asked one of them what his ambition was. He replied: "To learn English, so that I may become a big millionaire." I tried to get into rapport with another who was a Christian, and to speak with him sympathetically on religious matters; but he informed me, without a glimmer of guilt, that he had become a Christian in order to study English through following the reading of the Bible, the singing of hymns, and the sermons. There were Christian services conducted in Japanese, but he had no use for them: he attended the English church.

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I saw much of Noguchi during September and October. He had been invited to make a winter lecture-tour in America, and was preparing a series of lectures for the purpose. As he put each lecture into typescript he brought it to my room at leisure hours or after lunch in order that I might criticise his delivery of it. It was curious that, in spite of his ten years' life in America as companion

to an American poet, his long and intimate association with many eminent writers and speakers of English, and his constant study of English literature as a Professor of English in Keio University, he had never got beyond the mechanical limitations that the Japanese language has put upon the Japanese mouth. In Noguchi's case they created a few howlers, one of which I remember. Quoting a poem of his own he exclaimed :

“ Oh ! my berubbed,  
We shall fry in hebben.”

I explained that it was the other place they would fry in; but my jape went wide. He made a hundred patient attempts to get *l* into his mouth, likewise *v*. At the end of an hour, with close attention to every word, he could say :

“ Oh ! my beloved,  
We shall fly in heaven.”

But next day brought a relapse. On October 10 there was a small farewell dinner to Noguchi in a city restaurant, and four days later he started off to America. It was the last time I saw him. I had thought to be in Japan on his return, but my fate had determined things otherwise. I abandoned my University lectures, and went with my students to the

railway station. A large crowd of friends, including many men and women of high distinction, assembled to give a hearty *sayonara* (good-bye) to the poet. A month later the melancholy news was brought to my room late in the evening that his little daughter had died—she who had accepted me into her friendship with a cherry and a cake and a bow on the floor. I knew his fondness for the bright little creature and grieved for him; but his wife (with typical Japanese restraint of feeling) bound me not to tell him anything of the death in my letters for fear it would do him harm in his lecture-work. The strong mother-heart was prepared to suffer alone for several months for the sake of the happiness and good name of her comrade.

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Heretofore my activities had been confined to class-work in the University and a couple of lectures before a city club. They were now to take a wider sweep. I gathered that the



NOGUCHI AND DAUGHTER

invitation to me to join Keiogijuku was the first step of a plan that the University had conceived, of having, not a professional man only, but an actual worker in English literature, not only to put a finishing touch to the English undergraduates but also to give public lectures on literary topics. They were good enough to regard me as eligible for the fulfilment of their intention, and formally asked me to begin a series of weekly public lectures in the great auditorium. They left the matter of subject and treatment entirely in my hands, with the proviso that I should make the lectures living, not dully academical. I planned out a course of seven lectures under the general title, "Modern English Poetry, its Characteristics and Tendencies". The opening lecture ("The Field of Modern English Poetry") came off on Wednesday, October 15, the very day, to my regret, after the departure of my sponsor, Noguchi. Professor Kawai, Dean of the Faculty of Literature, introduced me in a short speech in Japanese, in which he spoke of the innovation that was being made by the lectures. Having regard to the fact that I was myself a poet, he said, he forestalled any risk of modest omission by publicly inviting me to devote one of the lecture-days to a recital of my own

poetry, a fact which I mention as indicating the breadth and elasticity of the University's methods. There was a big attendance of students of Keio and a good number from the Imperial University and some high schools. A few foreigners also were present. I cannot imagine how I should have got on had the lecture been extemporaneous, for the size of the hall and the audience seemed to rest like a huge weight on my mind. I knew that certain of the audience expected more from me than I felt capable of giving, for they referred to me somewhat grandiloquently as "successor to Lafcadio Hearn" (which was probably true chronologically though his chair was in the Imperial University); and I felt humbled and nervous in standing on the spot that had been made illustrious by the feet of Rabindranath Tagore when, four years previously, he had delivered a lecture in Keio University. Fortunately for me, my lectures had to be strictly 'lectures'; that is, they had to be read from manuscript as official documents for publication. This left me free to cope only with the matter of delivery—and in this respect the audience seemed to be satisfied.

After the lecture I asked three of the foreign members of the audience to come to my room

for tea, as I knew that they had sacrificed their afternoon refreshment for my sake. This became a weekly practice.

I delivered my course of seven lectures without a break. "The Japan Advertiser" considered them sufficiently valuable to print them almost completely each week. From this paper they were copied into the Japanese press. They were lifted *in extenso* into papers published in English in China, and extracts found their way into the American press. By the time the recital of my own poetry came I had found confidence, and faced the big hall with equanimity. I let myself go, and recited the selection *con amore*. The 'Advertiser' gave two columns to the selection. Some of the poems were translated into Japanese. My students purred with satisfaction at the 'fame' of their *sensei* (professor). He himself was simply gratified that his work was useful to the students, pleasant to the public, and accounted successful by the University. At twenty-one the circumstances might have threatened the disease of cranial distention: at forty-six they were part of the day's work. The lectures were subsequently published in book form in India.

My lecture-teas became 'a social event'. For various reasons they had to be kept within



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bounds as regards numbers. On two occasions I had the felicity of welcoming Dr. Clay Macaulay, a pioneer of spiritual and mental culture in Japan, and hale and keen at eighty. As a youth he had passed through the Civil War in America. Early in life he went to Japan as a Unitarian missionary. He made the country his home, learned its language, and profoundly influenced its educational development. When the founder of the Keiogijuku ('free school') had worked up his pioneer institution to college level, it was to Dr. Macaulay that he entrusted its organisation as a university. It was a great happiness to me to see the delight of the old gentleman in being made warmly welcome in the very rooms in which he had lived many years previously as an officer of the then young university. His description of a great earthquake that tilted the water in the fish-pond from one end to the other set me calculating how the big auditorium would behave if and when a similar shaking came, and where my plank-and-paper room, that stood under its great shadow, would find itself—and me. I took a special pleasure, I am afraid, in the fact that my guest made a direct link back to one of my literary deities, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Dr. Macaulay knew him familiarly;

both were members of the same religious community; and when I shook the hand that had shaken the hand of the Sage of Concord, I felt (on the basis of the Euclidian principle that hands which have shaken the same hand have shaken one another) that I had done the same. I realised also the wonder that is packed into Browning's question, "And did you once see Shelley plain?"

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## CHAPTER XII

### JAPANESE PAINTING AND PAINTERS

ON September 24 I had my first experience of a serious and adequate exhibition of Japanese painting. This was the annual show of the school of painting at the head of which stands one of the foremost Japanese artists of the day, Yokoyama Taikwan, who is, in the opinion of many, one of the two leaders of progressive classical art in Japan, the other being Shimomura Kanzan. Mr. Taikwan had thrown in his lot with Okakura Kakuzo (the well-known author of "Ideals of the East") when the latter, after a world-tour, returned to Japan an ardent advocate of the encouragement of art along indigenous lines but with adaptation of style to the psychology of the new era. A Government exhibition was founded, but it soon suffered decay through unintelligent official favouritism towards rigid antiquity. Okakura and his supporters withdrew, and after Okakura's death, Taikwan and Kanzan (in

1914) revived the Institute of Fine Art (*Bijutsuin*) which had been founded in 1898 by Okakura.

I was taken to the 1919 exhibition in a big building in Ueno Park by Noguchi, and was much helped towards an understanding of the works by his comments and by his translation of the titles of the pictures and the names of the artists—for of course everything was in Japanese. A sumptuous book of monochrome reproductions, and sets of coloured post-cards of many of the pictures, were on sale. These were extensively purchased by the crowds that streamed through the rooms, Noguchi and I following suit.

There were two sections in the exhibition—Japanese and Western. The Japanese section contained four large panels (each probably eight feet by four) by the master. In composition and craftsmanship they were perfect. Everything was in the exactly right place; every touch of the *fudé* (brush) was just as it should be, no more, no less. But beyond this there was something that troubled me with the double haunting of a presence and an absence. Behind the new works of the continuers of the Japanese tradition I saw the tradition itself stand with disturbing clearness. The eternal plum-blossom blossomed, the

inexhaustible waterfall fell, as in a thousand previous pictures. Each picture of today was a palimpsest-painting over a thousand preceding palimpsest-paintings. This robbed the new pictures of the sense of individual impulse or of personal discovery and revelation. They stood as delightful variations of a threadbare theme; as annual *tours de force* whose trans-Pacific rendering is 'stunts'. But stuntification lives next door to stultification. The showman may achieve perfection of expression within the limited catch-cries of his booth, but there is a danger of his mind's becoming satisfied to remain within the same narrow field. Something like this seemed to me, in presence of these new works in the classical manner, to have befallen this expression of the traditional art of Japan, notwithstanding the shades of difference which the progressive spirit had infused into old themes and modes. There was none of the speculation or exploration in them that makes for subjective progress, for that movement which implies imperfection. "The truth is," says Noguchi, "that we Japanese lack in curiosity; therefore we are not inventive, creative, but merely imitative." I am inclined to think that this statement of a self-critical Japanese goes, like all self-criticism, beyond

the truth. The obvious lack of curiosity in the Japanese temperament leads, not to 'mere imitation' in its art, but to a marked restriction in invention and creation. This is, I think, the truth that Noguchi stretched a little; and its enunciation does not imply any defect of appreciation of the positive achievement of Japanese classical art in technical perfection and æsthetical beauty. Within itself it is a relatively perfect achievement. Resting in that, one has temporarily entire satisfaction. But this satisfaction consists only in appreciation of a thing *done*; of full acceptance of conditions up to a certain point. This is the temper in which one approaches the works of ancient masters in the Louvre or the Kyoto Museum. But there is no ignoring the universal fact that the human consciousness cannot remain satisfied in any achievement. Its innate 'curiosity' pushes it forward through its Wonderland with eyes that are both inquisitive and admiring. The language of the growing soul may be put into Alice's phrase, "curiouser and curioser," as it speeds on its search for the ultimate 'curiousest'. The bearers of the Divine whisperings and shadowings that are the substance of the arts must be ever astir; that is why the Grecian Messenger of the Gods,

Hermes, is winged at heel, and the spirits of Music (*Gandharvas*) in India are beings of airy flight; that is why Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of the Arts, perpetually plays a *vina* (for music lives only in its passing from sound to sound), and Shiva, the Lord of Life, dances without ceasing. Life is joy in motion; the change called Death is but the soul's radical protest against an external threat of stagnation. We accept the master of the past because he is of the past, and justified at his point in history; but we cannot avoid asking if the masters of the present respond to the joy-in-change of the dancing feet of God. A stagnant perfection will ultimately defeat its own self-satisfaction by drawing upon itself the spirit of revolt. What was once an artistic ideal, a thing of splendour and appeal on the roof of endeavour, will become but the tiled floor of attainment: and, as says an accusing Japanese proverb, "A piece of broken jade is better than an unbroken tile:"—an imperfect thing above the head is better than a perfect thing under the foot.

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The revolt expressed by the existence of the western section in an adjoining room of the exhibition was not a revolt but a dreadful

nemesis. I was overcome by a feeling of resentment that I had travelled eleven thousand miles from Liverpool to 'the home of art' to have set before me the same cut lemons that sour every amateur exhibition in Great Britain and Ireland; the same groupings of 'still life' that shrieked a spurious 'realism'; the same inane 'Portrait of Mrs. Toplady' translated into 'Madame Tometo.' Noguchi's declaration, "We are merely imitative," began to jeer at me as I realised the devastating truth that this 'revolt' had not merely run away from classical Japan, but had bolted head down into the arms of the bad angel of western art—and had painted the Devil more ebon than his "customary suit of solemn black". The label 'Western Section' was a libel; it was not western art; it was a Japanese annexation of the most rudimentary elements in western art-schools, elements that were carried some degrees lower in the scale of bad art than their prototypes could achieve. The heavier hand and duller sensibility of the West can bring great æsthetic effects out of its materials in its own way; but the attempts of the light organism and delicate sensibility of Japan to ape both the method and subject-matter of the West had resulted in a number of doughy works that

might almost have come from a baker's kneading bowl instead of a school of painting.

It was clear that the modern revolt against both orthodox and progressive classicism had overshot its mark; but it also appeared clear that the cause of this failure lay in the common lack of curiosity. The classicists had closed out all but the faintest glimmer of the spirit behind a beautiful veil of æstheticism. "Art and life are quite different things in Japan," says Noguchi; and where art is cut off from the disturbing but vivifying force of life, it becomes restricted and formal. The new Japanese school of art had simply, it appeared to me, taken a foreign formalism to throw at the head of its own formalism. This was not, as I have said, a true revolt, but merely an inevitable act of revenge. The new school had not only cast away Japanese formalism, but had also cast away Japan's peculiar gift of beautiful feeling and craftsmanship. The river that had tried to overthrow its banks had only succeeded in overthrowing itself.

In thus setting up a new faction, and dignifying it with the name of revolt, the Japo-European painters were doing nothing more foolish than the record of human history the world over. The vexation of every open-eyed

seat on the front platform beside the motorman. This gave me a good outlook on the life along the streets as well as shelter behind the driver's glass screen from the cold wind and rain of late autumn. At a stopping-stage on the Ginza (the main shopping thoroughfare of Tokyo) a quarrel broke out between a passenger and the conductor. Language proceeded up the ladder to shrieks; and when language failed, hands came into action. The conductor caught the passenger by the neck of his *kimono*. The passenger proceeded to wrench himself free from this indignity. This was the signal for a panic inside the bus. Women with babies began to go hysterical; men used language that had the flavour of Billingsgate. In a moment or two the car was emptied. The passengers melted away in the crowd that had collected round the pair of struggling men. I gathered that the question at issue was a matter of a few *sen*, and at a break in the struggle I showed my hand holding out a number of coins offered to settle the dispute. But the matter had gone beyond financial adjustment. The conductor gave an explosion of Japanese and grunts at the offender, flung him among the crowd, jumped into the bus, said a hasty word to the driver—and I

sailed away, the solitary passenger, smiling, and thinking things.

\* \* \*

It is one thing to have an address on a piece of paper in both Japanese and English. It is another thing to find a house to fit it in Japan where fires raze whole sections of a city in an hour, and wooden building both necessitates and encourages alterations and extensions. I had a general idea as to the location of Mr. Taikwan's house, and made my way towards it by the causeway road across the middle of the big lotus pond by the side of Ueno Park. But when I came down to details as to *cho* and *ichomé* (street and block) I got hopelessly at sea in a fog. I found the Japanese, on this and other occasions, no good in locating places. I had talked and gesticated hat in hand with a policeman trying to find the house of Mr. Hugh Byas, when I first essayed to call without an escort, and after an hour and a half's search, found it—just where the policeman had started me from. I was on the point of abandoning my search for the master-artist when round a corner stalked the tall, bearded, turbaned figure of an Indian who had favoured me with his friendship during my public lecture course. He spoke

excellent English and apparently good Japanese. I told him the situation of affairs, and like a shot he spotted Mr. Taikwan's home—somewhere among scaffolding and piles of building material. I entered an open space through a gateway, and saw a man washing his hands with water which he lifted with a dainty wooden dipper from a hollowed basin in a stone pillar. I asked him if I could find Mr. Taikwan anywhere on the premises. He said he was Mr. Taikwan, and gave me a moment's mental quick-change in my portrait gallery. I had somehow painted the great leader of Japanese classical art as an elderly gentleman with a beard—why a beard I cannot imagine. Here was a man without a grey hair on his black head, beardless, and with no external signs of leadership. He ushered me into an aperture that proved to be the door to the receiving room of a house, while he dried his hands on a small towel bearing an artistic printed design. I removed my shoes and seated myself on an offered cushion at the side of a wide and deep square space in the middle of the floor in which a charcoal fire burned. Mr. Taikwan in full Japanese costume sat round the corner of the square and smoked cigarettes while I drank green tea and ate

Japanese sweetmeats. He apologised for the disorder outside his house, which, he said, he was rebuilding. Inside, everything was new and beautiful, and there was a distinction about the room that I had not seen in any other. We talked of his visit years before to India, and of his acquaintance with the Tagores. He disclosed a deep reverence for them and India. A young man, an art student, brisk, bright, and obviously devoted to his master, came into the room, bowed low, and said something in Japanese; whereupon Mr. Taikwan rose and led me by a narrow staircase to a commodious room upstairs where six large works were hanging for my inspection. Mr. Taikwan explained to me the subjects of his pictures, and answered many questions of mine as to the technique of his wonderfully beautiful art. From the first polite formalities of my entrance we passed to warm frankness, and in due time I found courage to put my main question with confidence that he would take it as general, and without personal reference though put in personal terms.

“How is it,” I asked, “that you, the foremost progressive painter in Japan today, as I have been told, have shown me half a dozen pictures here, the subjects of which I have, in my short

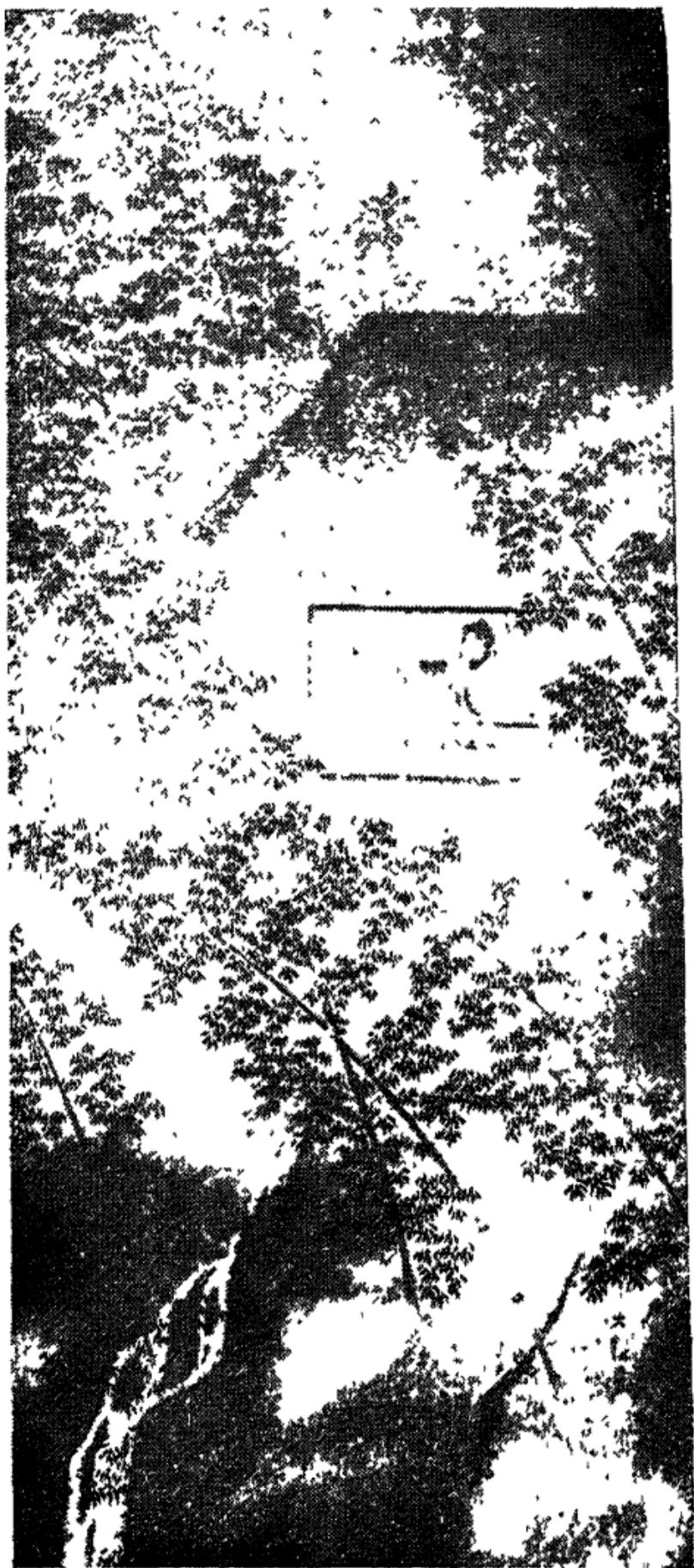
study of Japanese art, seen many times in the works of other artists both past and present?"

He turned my question over, with head set sideways, for a moment. Then he slowly said :

"It is because we Japanese have no originality. We do not invent or think. We take pleasure in going over and over the same subjects. Our art is all in its technique. We look to India for ideas." We talked of many other matters, but this opinion gave me a grip on something real by which I might get to a true understanding of Japanese art with its poignant excellences and its strange defects.

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I made to take leave of the artist with apologies for having taken up so much of his time, and with expressions of my gratitude for the great favour he had shown me ; but he would not let me go. He said he was free for the afternoon, and if I had no engagement he would like to give me a Japanese tea with a musical entertainment at a famous restaurant. I was free until dinner, but chary about encroaching on his time. He would take no denial, and telephoned an order. We walked, at my request, to the restaurant, as I wanted to see the street life and to continue my talk with him. But the talk, save one parenthesis of mine, went dumb at the door



THE WATERFALL BY TAIKWAN



of the restaurant where we were met by a middle-aged lady in sober Japanese costume, and several young ladies in anything but sober costumes, with every sign of welcome to a familiar friend. We had a beautifully decorated room to ourselves. We sat on dainty cushions with a



A GEISHA PARTY

*hibachi* (fire-box) between us, for it was cold and wet outside. A group of young *geisha* came in apparelled like rainbows that had been broken and draped in designs of colour impossible outside Japan, and set to rhythm. They were led by a woman of middle age who was as the dark ray in this spectrum of artifice. She played (that is to say, plucked unmusically now and again) a *samisen*, while the group of half a dozen *geisha* went through a short programme (opened with a deep salutation, knees and forehead on floor) of choruses and solo fan-dances.

The strangeness of the performance, its total difference from anything in Europe or elsewhere in Asia, interested one side of my mind; but there was another side that found no satisfaction in that caparisoned and painted posturing to harsh and monotonous singing. It is one of the puzzles of human development that a nation can develop extreme sensitiveness of eye and remain dull of ear, or vice versa. But there were changes apparently taking place in Japan, for I noticed that those who attended the performances of western music did not frequent the restaurants.

The meal, which I had anticipated as a simple affair quickly over, developed into a first-class Japanese feast, dish after dish in a leisurely succession that drew itself out to two hours. Before each of us was a beautiful lacquered tablette (if I may coin a word). On this each item of the multitudinous menu was set by the young lady attendant (one for each of us) who shuffled in on stocking feet, dropped on her knees and set before us a new dainty in a small lacquered basin daintily ornamented. My month at Oiwaké had made me an expert with the *hashi* (chopsticks) much to the pleasure of our entertainers. It was not difficult to avoid the carnivorous items—mainly

fish which rapped on the nose for admission to the mouth, and in my case were speedily identified and inhospitably turned away. Of vegetable preparations, fruits and sweets there was enough and to spare.

At such functions the beverage is the intoxicant *saké*, a fiery degradation of the innocent snowy rice. It is served warm in little lacquered *saké*-cups. It is part of the performance for the guests to hand a cup of the wine to each of the *geisha* who sit on the floor chatting and chaffing with the guests. The young *geisha* knew no English, but the leader knew a good deal, and with her aid and Mr. Taikwan's I entered as much as possible into the fun, as I wanted to touch if I could the essence of Japanese tradition. I took my *saké* (that is, I pretended to drink it), and followed the artist in the ritual of presentation to the *geisha*. I won some applause for my success, and for some happy rejoinders, translated answers to translated jests that the silent watcher in the back of my mind smiled on with a touch of pity. But, bathetic as the conversation was, I detected no hint of vulgarity or pruriency in it. I had heard many things as to the system of concubinage in Japan, and I remembered Kobé and its glimpse

of loose morality ; but at this function, with young women dressed elaborately from neck to heel, there was infinitely less suggestion of sex than at a semi-nude western dinner party.

At a point half way through the menu, as far as I could reckon, the *geisha* retired to the far end of the room to give another performance of music and dance. At the end of the feast, with much bowing on the floor, and again with repeated bows at the door as I put on my boots, I took my leave. A big motor-car was at the door, placed at my disposal by Mr. Taikwan ; and in it, with a luxurious rug around me, I was driven to the University in a downpour of rain.

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Looking back over my four hours' contact with the foremost classical artist of Japan, I realised that for much pumping I had drawn little water. This might be, of course, as much the fault of the pump as the water, though I had a growing conviction that the Japanese are not as a race distinguished by communicativeness, which might, I thought, come down to the matter of language. It might also go deeper. A fellow professor confessed that he had tried to translate my drama, "The King's Wife," into Japanese, but had given it up. It

was 'too mystical'. Yet its mysticism was the commonplace of intelligent thought and conversation in India. I remembered that in my talks with Japanese men and women I had not succeeded in getting any response of an abstract nature, any glow of the spirit. Just behind the region of the æsthetical there was a curtain, exquisite in colour and design, but so close and particular that it gave the inner eye no vision of generalities, no disturbance of universals. It is in this lofty region of universals that the streams which turn the wheels of progress have their source, and that region is within each individual. The Indian monsoon will not water the rice-fields of Japan though the one sky covers both. To taste the water of life we must dig our own well in our own garden. "We look to India for ideas," said Taikwan. Just so—and just so long will Noguchi's charge stand mainly true: "We Japanese lack in curiosity; therefore we are not inventive, creative . . ." for the function of the mind cannot be delegated without producing atrophy . . . This was a negative position to get into. I wanted a positive thought to give me a sense of reality. In my conversation with the artist there was much earth but little ore; yet it began to dawn on me that from that ore there might be

minted a coin that might have an essentially greater value than much copper. I saw the gleam of ore in the master's indication of India as the source of ideas ; for it became increasingly clear to me, as I sank into the meaning of things, that the India of ideas was not necessarily a geographical entity but a psychological degree. It was from India (by way of China and Korea) that Japan in the sixth century received, in the form of Buddhist religion and art, the sublime impulse of spiritual idealism which awoke her to great dreams and great achievement in expression. But she passed in the tenth century (when she became deliberately insular and cut herself away from the culture of Asia) from golden day into a twilight—odorous, haunted, delicately shaded, but still twilight, with none of the positiveness of either light or darkness, of wide-eyed creation or of receptivity

Of the dim wisdoms old and deep  
That God gives unto man in sleep.

Insularity, I perceived, was the sin against the Holy Spirit of Art, for it sets its face towards disintegration, which is the way of death. In a true universe an act of disintegration can only justify itself by being a step towards a new integration. This is a test of all action.

A bad conscience had (I saw) driven the two best known insular cultures to attempts at atonement. English culture had tried to escape the penalty of insularity by artificially assuming continental dimensions through the imposition of itself on other peoples. But the little circle can only manage to contain the greater circle by stretching itself to thinness. Even if the eternal assessors were hoodwinked by the superficial appearance of extension, nemesis sits at the heart of the thing itself. Japanese culture tried to escape the results of insularity, first by making itself so beautiful that all the world might desire it; and afterwards, within the last twenty years or so, by annexing the culture of the continents of America and Europe. She failed in the first because by specialisation she, the alleged imitator, became inimitable. She won the world's admiration for her unique beauty, but no offers of artistic marriage. Whistler looked sideways at her, and made an exception in his 'gentle art of making enemies'; but he did not aspire to her hand—he would have crushed it in his grip. The Japanese touch remains untouched... She has likewise failed in her modern attempt to attach herself to the western continent of art because of that self-same inimitability. Her

æsthetical physique is too delicate to play at Atlas and bear the white man's burden of artistic realism. She was made for more delicate ends. It came to me with increasing certainty that Japan's way of escape from artistic insularity, her way of recovery of her primal inspiration, lay in a return to India—not necessarily the India of the map, but that region within the being of Japan which stands as the equivalent of the inner India, the region of spiritual realisation and enthusiasm which contact with India awoke fourteen centuries ago and which Japan herself may reawaken within herself.

It did not occur to me among these reflections that Japanese artists should renounce the use of materials which the West has adopted. They have as much right to use oil colours as the painters of Paris. The glaring flaw in the western section of the exhibition was not its adoption of western methods and materials, but the deeper fact that if its pictures had been hung surreptitiously among the works of the Amateur Artists' Association of Brushholme-on-Thames no one would have known the difference. Japan had not *used* western materials; she had let herself be used by them. What I wanted to find was a Japanese artist who could use any

kind of instrument or medium for the expression of individual vision and conviction, and yet retain the traditional Japanese quality of touch and beauty. To my great joy and edification I found him just before the wind of destiny blew me back to India.

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In the course of my public lectures in Keio University I had made the acquaintance of a young man of mixed Japanese and British parentage who had gone through the European war and become, as a consequence, interested in the deeper problems of life and death. In the course of his quest for light he had found his way to The Theosophical Society in London, and had heard my name mentioned as a member of that body. When he returned home to Japan he was pleasantly surprised to discover me in full blast as a public-lecturing professor in Tokyo. He made himself known to me at the end of an extra lecture (illustrated by lantern slides) which lives in my memory as an example of another side of Japanese psychology. A big crowd of students and visitors had assembled. Everything was ready, but we could not begin until an officer with an electric meter came to record the quantity of current used. It was a regulation, and Japan (thanks to the

arch-regulator Iyeyasu Tokugawa—of unhappy memory, in this instance) is tied to the wheel of regulation. At the end of an agonising hour the meterman came and we made an official start. A young man waited until the rest had gone after the lecture was finished, and then introduced himself. We established an intimate friendship. Later he told me of an artist with whom he had been a close friend before he went to Europe. On his return he had found somewhat bewildering developments in his friend's experience and art, and he wanted me to meet him and see if I could explain the phenomena.

I met the artist a couple of times in Tokyo, and perceived that beneath his smart semi-European and eager exterior there was some deeper life that needed sympathetic understanding and an explanation of itself in order to attain confidence for full expression. At his invitation I visited his studio a couple of days before leaving Japan. He gave me his card with full address in Japanese, and instructions to take the electric train to Shibiya station on the outskirts of the city, and a *kuruma* (rickisha) to his house at Yoyogi. I hailed a *kuruma* at Shibiya—and found myself in the same plight as in my search for Taikwan. The *kurumaya*

(rickisha-man) looked at the card, cocked his head on one side, thought hard, brought several men to his aid who cocked their heads and thought hard,—and handed me back the card saying *wakarimasen* ('I do not understand'.) Neither did I; and it did not help me to comprehension of their failure to comprehend, to find myself the centre of a staring crowd of rickisha-men, coolies and small boys all in the same state of gaping ignorance as to the whereabouts of the studio of Tami Koumé at Yoyogi. "He is a *great artist*," I said, addressing the meeting with a tone of rebuke, and making the proper movements of a *fudé* on silk which I had learned from Taikwan. The audience laughed—but I did not see the joke; I was so chagrined at their dulness, that I was dull enough not to see that *I* was the joke—a white-faced foreigner, far from home, etc., making signs on the air and uttering unintelligible sounds outside a Tokyo suburban station. I remembered that Shibiya was the station for Leach's pottery. I looked around and above in the hope that he might fall from the leering skies jabbering Japanese with an English accent, or that my turbaned Indian friend might emulate certain stories by appearing in our midst as he had done at Taikwan's. Then something

happened; and the crowd made a lane along which came a vision. It was not Leach, or the Indian. It took the form of a Japanese young woman of beautiful countenance, exquisitely dressed, and radiating sweetness of soul. I was nonplussed. It was quite unusual for a live Japanese young woman to approach a foreign man in the public streets. I must have wondered (I imagine) if Japanese lady-visions were less particular than their sisters in the flesh. I did the only thing possible in the puzzling circumstances—took off my hat and bowed profoundly with a very respectable smile. The vision stopped a yard in front of me, bowed, and in a tone and accent that made English sound a new and delicious language, said: “Can I be of any service to you?” I replied to the effect (more or less) that I had come from Ireland via India to find the answer to the question—“What is wrong (if anything) with Japanese art, and how (if necessary) may it be cured?”—but that I was held up in my quest by the fact that (as Noguchi said), “art and life are quite different things in Japan”, and rickisha-men are not on familiar terms with great painters. I handed her the card bearing in Japanese the name and address of Tami Koumé. She broke into a

laugh as silvery as that of the streamlet that fell into the pool behind Speight's house at Nikko. "Why, that is my brother!" she exclaimed. She said a few words in Japanese to the *kurumaya*, who chirped *hai* (yes) with a feeble grin of comprehension, and (hat in hand) motioned me into his machine. I expressed my thanks and pleasure to my deliverer. The occasion felt as if it called for some delay and conversation; but, duty done, she faded from my sight forever (up to date). The *kurumaya* lifted his silver-mounted handles to the angle that gives one the posture of royalty in the most plebeian of vehicles, and trotted off with me on the Great Quest. I reflected *en route* that at no railway station in India could a rickisha-man be found who would let ignorance of an address stand in his way of accepting a fare and going out into the void in the faith of ultimately colliding with the desired haven and extracting three times the fare as a premium on his own ignorance;—which reflection gave me an oblique view into the character of the Japanese *kurumaya*.

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In about twenty minutes we turned off a broad road through a carved wooden gateway into a region of old-world beauty and repose.

A garden of evergreens and graceful trees enclosed a home that spoke of age-long culture. A tall plum-tree blossomed exquisitely at the door of Mr. Koumé's studio. He welcomed me on the step in Japanese costume with a deep bow. He seated me in a cosy chair in a corner of his studio and set before me a feast of edible dainties; but my eyes were feeding on something more attractive. The walls of the room were hung with the young artist's finished pictures, and round the bottom of the walls stood works in various stages of incompleteness which gave one a look into the methods of the artist. My first impression was of richness and industry that had run to incoherence. The pictures were hung with no eye to plan. They just happened, as I thought. Their order rooted in disorder stood, so to speak. They were not regulated exhibits, but living creations, and their surface medley in subject and style tempted me towards synthesis, a temptation to which I succumb almost without temptation. As I looked around the studio with outer and inner eye, the pictures appeared to fall into certain groups. There were some that showed perfect satisfaction in the thing seen—a portrait, for example, of a Russian danseuse, posed on the verge of

danger but just missing it, and painted in pure Academy style but with an individual delicately tense touch that made my memory of the ladies of the fish-bowl feel like a bad dream. Other pictures expressed sensation and experiment, and suggested dissatisfaction with past achievement and a desire to break new ground. Still others showed the passage from sight to significance; they posed nature and humanity as counters for the expression of ideas. One in particular struck me. It was an oil painting in which heads, arms, hands, legs, a flaming brand, and splashes of fire and blood were thrown together in what appeared to be confusion. Closer scrutiny, however, revealed clear design, and the somewhat irritating fact that not a single item in the composition could be tracked to completeness. The picture seemed to cut across the process of the universe just at the point at which (one might imagine) the concrete might fly off in fragments towards the absolute. I jumped to its intention, and asked the artist if he could not have expressed the idea of Struggle as Meissonier painted his 'Quarrel'. "Oh! no," he replied. "That would only depict men struggling—not struggle itself, which is what I wanted to paint." With this intent he had painted no complete figure in his picture. It

was not a symbol of struggle, like the 'Laocoön'. It was just struggle—the nearest approach to painting the abstract in terms of the relative. There was another group of pictures that did not belong to either the world of actuality or of idea; they breathed a life that was palpable but not human, though their visible forms were human. They looked out as though momentarily evoked from the realm of dream, or (and here I felt I touched the artist's secret) as things seen in trance or with eyes that roved along the marches of this world and that. I perceived that in the order of my grouping I had mapped the artist's pilgrimage from alp to alp of a heightening and expanding consciousness to a point at which he stood uncertainly at the world's end. This was where (as our introducer had hoped) my studies in occultism might be of service to the artist; and we talked matters over with great earnestness. What we said, however, is not for print. I was satisfied that my quest was complete: I had found an artist who was master of every method, eastern and western, who retained his racial technique, and who drew the water of life from the inexhaustible well of his own soul. "I am not a Japanese artist;—I am *an artist*," he said; and in the saying he flashed on me the fallacy



A LADY BY TAMI KOUMÉ



that is in western sections of Japanese art-exhibitions. It is like speaking of a southern department of the North Pole. It is a masquerade, not a creation. It is not wrong because it is western, but because it is not art. True art must be authentic, direct, vital. Being this, it may use what materials it pleases, and remain itself. When I left Tami Koum  in his studio at Yoyogi, and went (in his motor-car even as I had left Taikwan) to a farewell party of poets, I carried with me his *art-credo*, some sentences of which are these :

When I stood on the summit of pure spiritual vision, I was an artist, not a painter.

True art has neither composition nor colour nor canvas : these are the inventions of artists.

When spirit speaks to spirit, the machinery of tradition is inadequate.

One day I shall express the pure negotiation of spirit with spirit.

Through my art I ascend a step of the eternal staircase—but there is another.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller study of the art of Tami Koume see "Work and Worship," Chapter X.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "THE FLOWERS OF TOKYO"

JAPAN is a land of flowers. Every month of the year has its own particular bloom. I went with thousands to Takao, outside Kyoto, in November, on the annual pilgrimage to no theological shrine but to the flaming altar of the maples, when they go to their urn of the winter in one grand red and golden conflagration of colour. On the heights overlooking the bay of Yokosuka, the son of a Japanese general showed me in December the first sign of the coming plum blossom with as much delight as I myself have felt over the annual miracle of the gummy-chestnut shoot in an Irish spring. It will be observed, however, that these contacts with the blossoms of Japan involved forthgoings. "The land of flowers" (like "the land of the rising sun") is an excellent guide-book phrase; but it needs watching, or it will overflow the uninitiated imagination beyond the borders of plain truth. It is about as near to the facts of

Japan's vegetation as "the land of the shamrock" is to Ireland's. I had more intimate acquaintance with the Japanese chrysanthemum in my front garden in Dublin than I had in Tokyo. But that was Tokyo's fault, not Japan's, the fault of all urban civilisations in claiming the qualities and characteristics of rural life, as though they were of the city, when, in fact, the city is the place of their humiliation in artificial exhibitions, and of their slavery and death in shops and markets.

But I did not have to go beyond the evergreen shrubs of my little garden on a hill in the suburbs of Japan's vast sprawling capital in order to see "the flowers of Tokyo". Officially they begin in November, when the maples have gone and the chrysanthemums are on exhibition in Hibiya Park, and end in March, when the cherries are just showing signs of rebirth ; but, while winter (strange paradox) is the time of their sky-ascending glory, and darkness the chosen background of their brief but awe-inspiring beauty, they are to be seen in every other season of the year. Their favourite time for blossoming is the early hours of the morning ; but there is no danger of missing them even if one sleeps as soundly as a South Indian night watchman. Men in uniform, whose sole

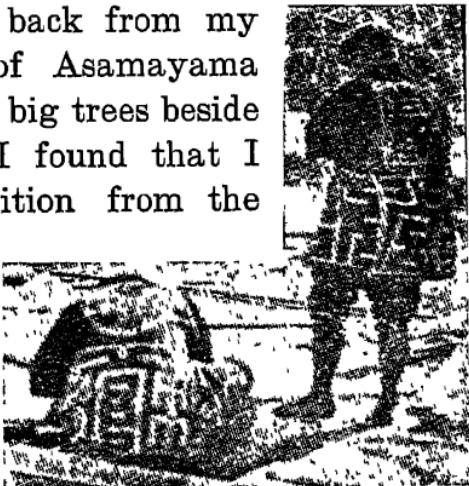
business is to announce the blossoming of "the flowers of Tokyo," are stationed in small wooden houses at the tops of tall towers or posts. As soon as they see the first golden petal winging its way towards the heavens, they announce the event by hammering a bell so that dull sleepers may be aroused not only to view a new upshooting of "the flowers of Tokyo" but to look out for others; for these flowers are of the banyan breed, only immensely speedier; one petal alighting on fertile soil may spring into life almost as quickly as the parent plant from which the wind of fate has wafted it. The look-out men also give a signal to other men in uniform down below. These at once crowd into motor-cars or horse-drawn wagons, and rush through the streets blowing whistles, ringing bells, screeching and howling on pneumatic sirens, in frantic haste to pump water on "the flowers of Tokyo"—even if rain is falling, as it does on 200 days of the 365.

And here my allegory (for such it is) breaks down, for the water is not pumped on "the flowers of Tokyo" for their refreshment but for their extinction. "The flowers of Tokyo" are the *fires* of Tokyo, perhaps, to a foreigner, the most disturbing element in that vast congeries of wooden and paper houses, open fire-boxes,

badly laid and badly insulated electric wires, eternal cigarettes and narrow streets.

\* \* \*

My real acquaintance with "the flowers of Tokyo" (as the Japanese have characteristically named their fires) did not begin until four months after my arrival, and was properly led up to through a preliminary acquaintance with earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and storms, as indicated in the preceding chapters, so that the shock was not so severe, when it came, as it might otherwise have been. When I arrived at the end of May, the weather was warm, and inducements for the blooming of "the flowers of Tokyo" therefore at a minimum. When summer vacation terminated in the middle of September, and I got back from my lodgings on the hill of Asamayama to my room under the big trees beside the little fish-pond, I found that I had made the transition from the frying pan to the fire —from a ricketty life on the slope of Japan's ever-active volcano to a life of alarms and excursions as next neighbour to an



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appallingly efficient district fire station that had shot up (as the jerky manner of Japanese buildings is) in my two months' absence, through the efforts of that most agile of human beings, the Japanese workman.

From this time forward I became more and more fire-conscious, and ultimately entered into full understanding of the Japanese custom of spreading one's bedding on a large *furoshike* (cloth for parcel-carrying), so that when the ubiquitous fire-demon found one's house (as assuredly he would at least once in a lifetime) one could reach the street with one's vital possessions in a couple of minutes. From that time onward I went to bed with my loins girt, so to speak, for flight; for expedition in such an event is luridly necessary, since paper and sticks, which are the universal means for the rapid kindling of a fire, are the main components of a Japanese house. My own immediate environment developed, as the cold weather came in, a number of promising features from the point of view of an admirer of "the flowers of Tokyo"—possible electrical short circuits and sparks when hungry rats dined off the insulating material of the wires laid in the space between the planked ceiling and the roof; night carousals of college

societies in the adjoining club-room, at which students smoked cigarettes and were not over particular as to where they threw burning matches, and after which a coal fire in an open grate was supposed to be rendered harmless by sprinkling water on the planked floor to which a fallen live coal might rebound ; a cooking department attached to the club ; a private kitchen separated from my room by a wooden wall through which the crackling of freshly lit charcoal gave me daily cold shivers at 6 a.m. until the happening of nothing brought me gradually back to confidence in my non-flammable horoscope.

But the close contiguity of the fire station wrought a subtle change in my inner nature. The concentrated attention of the station, turned outward in search of fire, and the centralisation of the thought of a closely packed district towards its protector from its greatest danger, established some kind of fire-thought around the station, in which I lived a salamander kind of life. So strong was this fire-thought that it produced a suggestion of warmth even when there were six inches of snow on the ground ; and in the inner life it induced a kind of prophetic clairvoyance that invaded my sleep and woke me with the

sensation of a flaming rocket striking me in the solar plexus—to hear a few seconds later the alarm shouted from the look-out man and the almost immediate sortie of the fire-fighters in a sound-swirl of high power motor engines, bells, whistles and sirens.

Generally I stuck valiantly to my bed through these events; but on occasions when the glare in the sky, which I could see by sliding my *shoji*, was particularly lurid, and there were sounds of something dropping on the roof (flying wind-borne fire-petals which might carry a seed of flame), the chief cook would call *sensei!* *sensei!* (Professor! Professor!) from his room, and I would get up, don an overcoat and slippers, and join the family in fire-viewing from some vantage point on our hilltop. On one occasion I returned to my ice-cold room frozen to the marrow after standing bare-headed for a quarter of an hour, forgetful, in the excitement of watching a nobleman's mansion go up in sparks, that the thermometer registered twenty degrees Fahrenheit.

\* \* \*

I got a glimpse into the heart of the fire-mystery of Japan while spending the winter vacation at Kamakura in the home of a Japanese friend—and found it to be no mystery, but

the natural expression of a happy-go-lucky temperament which has not either the patience or the imagination to tackle thoroughly the problem of prevention. I had gone for my morning wash to the neat little bathroom. The sliding door which led into the kitchen had been left not fully drawn across, and a casual glance through the space as I passed it showed me something that made me shout for the servant and fill a bucket of water. A piece of live charcoal had fallen out of the stove on to the wooden floor. A little flame was putting its fingers out on all sides in all the energy of new life seeking sustenance and adventure. Fortunately for the property of my friend, not to mention my own few belongings, the servant (who knew as much English as I did Japanese, which was very little) smelt fire in my voice and came in a second. She rubbed her sandalled foot over the flame—and grinned—and went on with her work as usual. Had I come five minutes later, or lain snug in my bed on a snowy morning in a top room from which escape was difficult, another blossoming of “the flowers of Tokyo” might have taken place—but I might not have been found to record it!

During this same vacation I had a second touch from the golden wings of the fire-deities.

I received an invitation to join Mr. and Mrs. Eichheim and Mr. and Mrs. Byas at dinner in The Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, but other engagements at Kamakura prevented my acceptance. The dinner was on Saturday night. The newspaper of Monday morning brought the news that while dinner was proceeding, the fire alarm was raised. The annexe adjoining the main building was soon a roaring furnace. Happily, as the annexe was purely a sleeping department, and the guests were all at dinner, no life was lost, but very little property could be saved. The newspaper gave a headline to the item, "Eichheim's violin saved"—a three hundred year old Tononi for which he had paid five thousand dollars (fifteen thousand rupees). Two years later the main building followed the annexe to destruction and took with it a large quantity of regalia and gifts carried by members of the entourage of the Prince of Wales. An inquiry disclosed the fact that the disastrous fire was caused by a hotel servant who threw the smouldering end of a cigarette on a heap of rubbish in the hotel cellarage. He was tried by law—and fined a nominal sum. But the cause most frequently blamed for "the flowers of Tokyo" is faulty electric wiring—an expensive nemesis for cheap and nasty workmanship.

which is the bane of one side of the industrial and commercial development of the new Japan.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FOREIGN RELATIONS

WHETHER because of the penetrating power of the American accent, or the hustle of the American foot, one gets an impression that there are a terrible lot of Americans in Japan. There are other foreigners, to be sure, but they hide behind themselves and do not strike the retina or tympanum with any force. The English foreigner wanders about pretending that he is not really a foreigner, but a man and a brother who, but for the accident of circumstances, might have added Japan to his share of the white man's burden, and is balanced between regret and relief that he did not. But the American is different. He smears his forehead (so to speak) with 'pep,' as an Indian devotee of Shiva does with the sacred cow-dung ashes. He moves forward as if he had a lumbar disease called 'punch'. He is uninterested in all things Japanese (save its currency) for he has the Munro doctrine in his despatch-box. He has

also "The Saturday Post" in his pocket—which places him as regards taste in literature. These impressions, however, apply mainly, perhaps only, to the predatory American of the shop counter and the hotel buffet. The diplomatic American is of another kind. He is widely read, versatile in interest, a practical idealist, good mannered yet homely and free. He stands as a co-ordinating medium between the rival interests of commercialism—to which all diplomacy ultimately cuts down. I met him first on October 20 when I had the honour of being invited to dine privately with the American Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Roland C. Morris, at the Embassy. I was put at ease at once by the genially frank manner in which the Ambassador seized on my professional interests as matter for conversation. We did not long talk 'shop,' however. I think he discovered that I was not a very professional person (I had not even a beard), and he let me know that he was not a very formidable ambassadorial person. He was about forty. His round, cheery face and slightly rotund figure gave him an aspect of gracious humanity. He moved easily, and always with information and judgment, from topic to topic, until we settled down after dinner in the spacious drawing-room (furnished

comfortably, but with decorative reserve) to psychical research, in which we discovered we had mutual interests and similar experiences. He had, he said, gone into the matter as a lawyer, and had arrived at the conclusion that, despite a good deal of humbug, there was a residuum of phenomena that could only be accounted for by the assumption of intelligent discarnate entities. As to the metaphysical questions that arose out of this conclusion, he left these to others.

\* \* \*

A month later I dined again at the Embassy, this time as one of a large number of guests invited to meet Miss Pendleton, the Superintendent of Wellesley College for Women in the United States. Many Japanese ladies had graduated from Wellesley. One of them was my dinner partner, the clever acting head mistress of a large girls' school in Tokyo, a lady of delicate beauty and keen intelligence, and exquisitely dressed in ceremonial Japanese costume. This lady had been a Christian in her girlhood, and had gone to America for education as a Christian. But the general life of America did not impress her as being superior to the civilisation of her own country ; and she returned to Japan and Buddhism. Nevertheless, she was highly critical of the defects in

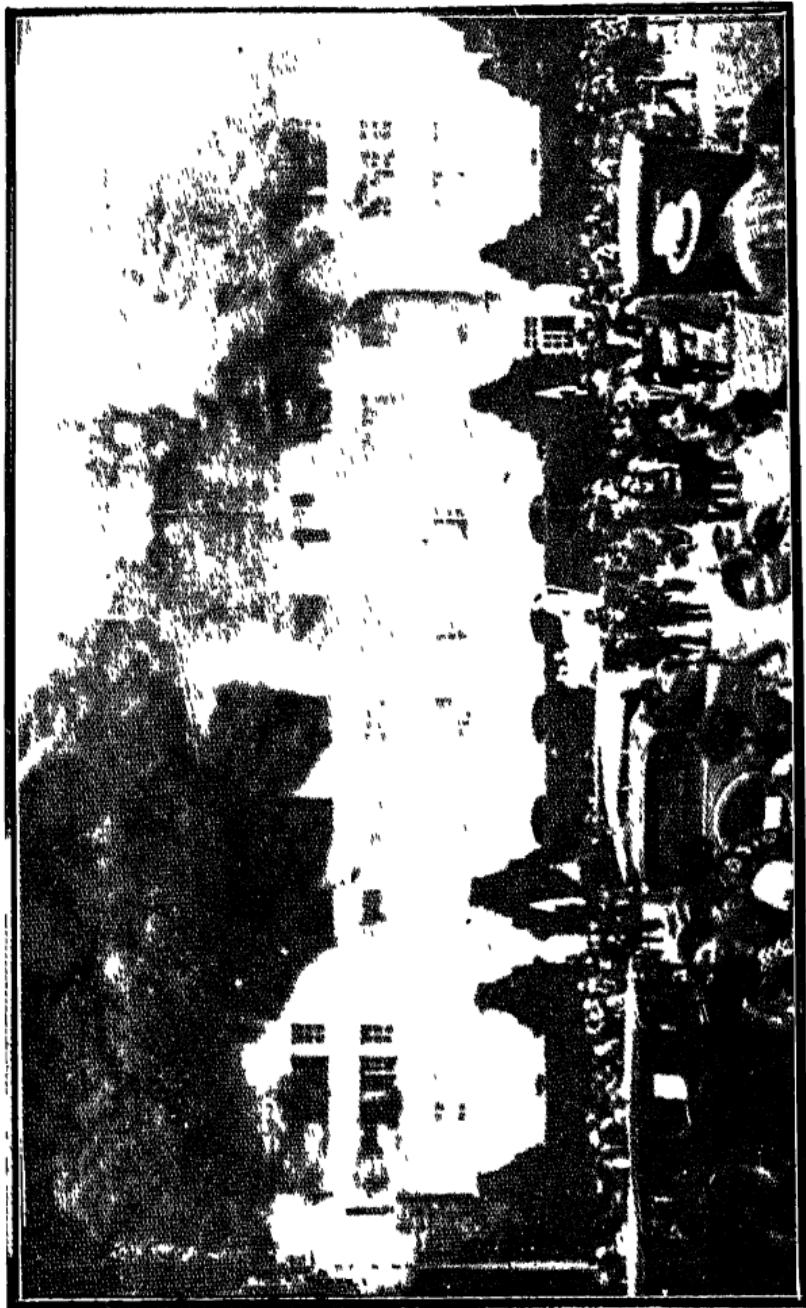
Japanese life, and she struck me as being a power for good.

I noticed with some surprise, and not a little confused pleasure, that His Excellency had placed me only one remove from his left hand, the intervening guest being one of the party to whom the dinner was given. I explained the situation as being due to his wish to pay a compliment to Japan in the person of my Japanese partner. After dinner my partner, with delightful tact, set me free to respond to sundry requests for talks on literary and other topics in various corners of the room. The Professor of Literature was a *persona grata* apparently, especially with an elderly lady of fierce Irish Nationalist proclivities. I had a talk with Miss Pendleton, but found my educational idealism fall flat.

\* \* \*

Two days after the Embassy dinner I went to Kyoto at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Eichheim to spend the week-end with them. I had been in correspondence with them over a violin and piano recital which I had induced them to give in the Keio University auditorium for the Wagner Society. I found them somewhat homesick. Robinson Crusoe's hunger for 'the sound of the church-going bell' was not more sharp

than theirs for some touch of race-intimacy, for Thanksgiving Day was just at hand, and all its home associations cried out for satisfaction. By good luck the Keio recital was arranged for two days after Thanksgiving Day, which gave them the impulse to come up to Tokyo where there was more chance of being with American people at the American festival. But hotel life did not promise the vital touch. An idea occurred to me. I reckoned on Eichheim's musical generosity, and saw his fiddle as the magical link between their hearts' desire and other people's great pleasure. In a prophetic moment I assured them that they would have a good festival. They smiled thankfully, but incredulously. I got back to Tokyo with two days in which to plot for the making happy of two groups of people. I knew there was to be a Thanksgiving Day dinner at the American Embassy, and I was aware that good music would be appreciated but was not available. I got in touch with the Ambassador's secretary by telephone. He was doubtful that America's great violinist would consent to play to official Americans in an after-dinner mood. I pledged myself to the contrary. My reliance on the mutual need and generosity of spirit of both ~~artist~~ and diplomat justified itself. When





Mr. and Mrs. Eichheim reached the Imperial Hotel at Tokyo on November 26, they found awaiting them an invitation to the Thanksgiving Day dinner at the American Embassy, and a hope that they would kindly play some music after dinner. They did. I (not an American) was asked to come in for coffee and eventualities. The commodious room proved an excellent resonator for a good semi-grand piano which (as part of the plot) had been installed for the occasion. The home-happiness had everyone of the large company in the mood for giving and taking pleasure. The two artists were in perfect musical rapport. Eichheim played with a beauty and sincerity that went to the soul. The Ambassador seated me beside him, and at the end of each item beamed on me with delight. The two selfless artists enfolded me in the radiation of their happiness. And I was satisfied. . . It was a bitterly cold night outside, and in order to get up my circulation before going into a cold bed in a plank-and-paper room, I tramped home through unfamiliar streets whose midnight silence was occasionally broken by the *whack whack* of the night watchman's two sticks, or the bugle-call of the *tofu*-man which gives out the first three notes of Chopin's Nocturne Number 12—*ta-a*

*tee ta-a.* It was my turn now for 'nostalgia of the heart,' for I had with me the memory of a beloved music-maker five thousand miles away to whom the occasion would have been a deep æsthetic joy; but I felt that I had been hearing not for myself only, and that there were invisible messengers who would carry to her inner ear the joy of perfect art at the service of human kindness. It was strange almost to uncanniness to step outside myself and watch the curious waif of hidden history who went tramping through Tokyo in a big over-coat, muffler and goloshes, knowing not a soul of the few wanderers in clinking *geta* whom he met, and shut out from them by the barred door of language. Yet that funny lonely biped had taken birth forty-six years previously, in a mean street of a town eleven thousand miles away, for the purpose of voyaging to India, and from thence to Japan, to perform the function of bringing together two of America's leading musicians and the accredited representative of America in the land of the Mikado. It seemed silly—and splendid.

Two months later I was bridge-building again. At the suggestion of Mr. Morris I was invited to deliver the annual address before the Asiatic Society of Japan. I took the subject of

"Indian Architecture and Sculpture" which I illustrated by lantern slides of my own. The meeting was held in the Embassy, and at tea afterwards I had the felicity of meeting Mrs. Morris who had returned from a visit to America—a lady of signal grace, beauty and intelligence. She detained me for a private talk on the educational work in India in which she had gathered I was specially interested.

\* \* \*

My foreign relations took a wide and unexpected sweep some time later. I seemed to have been appointed unofficial Ambassador from the Kingdom of Culture to Amercia--this time it was to the southern half of the great lanky continent which bears the name of Amerigo Vespucci. I was asked to visit a Christian missionary school in Tokyo and address the students. A certain number of the students were kept away by their parents, because it had been whispered abroad that I was a dreadful thing called a Theosophist. From the point of view of religious exclusiveness they were quite right. The river that wants to remain a river should keep away from the accursed ocean, in which commingle the waters that were condensed for a brief

career of illusory separateness out of the universal cloud. It was not my intention, of course, to follow the example of the good orthodox folk by 'boosting' my own faith at the expense of others'; yet it was, I suppose, as difficult for me to hide my breadth as for them to hide their narrowness. The daring ones who risked infection found my address quite harmless theologically. I merely recommended the students to try to be a moon, a river and a mountain—symbols of illumination, purity and aspiration. But there was a lad of sixteen present, of the race of Cortez, in whose mind there was a centre of deeper response than any of the others. A phrase, credally innocent as a phrase, but striking his mind at a peculiar angle, awoke him to the consciousness of something esoteric between us that must be said. He got into communication with me, and disclosed himself as a student of Indian philosophy. He had translated one of Swami Vivekananda's books into his native Spanish. His father was also a student of philosophy, and he would take me to him. This he did in a few days, and I had the unique experience of seeing the Ambassador to Japan of a South American Republic producing from locked secrecy certain books that we had both studied, and

that stood for the central interests of our lives.

\* \* \*

Curiously enough, while I was hail-fellow-well-met in the embassies of North and South America, I never got nearer than the end of a frigid bow to the British Embassy, under whose guardianship I was supposed, by the accident of birth, to live. I made several attempts to penetrate its dignity, but failed, largely because of the derision of certain of my acquaintances—Englishmen to boot—for the dulness and stuffy early-Victorian feeling of the institution. I was given to understand also that my congenital foolishness in being born an Irishman (which might, however, be forgiven me at a pinch) was a black mark against me, though not so black as my acquired and unforgivable super-foolishness in admitting that I was on friendly terms with an old woman in India, Besant by name, who, at the age of seventy-two, when she should have sense, was actually leading a campaign to obtain political responsibility for Indians—and thus threatening to rob 'God's Englishmen' of one of the necessities of their lives, a subject race to rule.

What truth was behind these floating suggestions I never had an opportunity to learn,

and I mention them, without assigning any value to them, as merely indicative of the mental assumptions that formed part of the life of the foreign element in their queer crannies in the edifice of the new Japan. An effort was made by some musical friends to bring the matter of my standing with the British Embassy to a test. An appointment was made by them to play some music at the Embassy. Then they asked permission to bring another person and me with them. Verbal permission was given. Next morning the appointment was cancelled by letter on the grounds of an unforeseen engagement. I accepted the circumstance as *bona fide*, but others smiled knowingly.

Later I found myself in the Embassy, but by the back door, so to speak. I received a wireless message from an Indian acquaintance at sea literally, likewise figuratively as regards his passport. I boarded the steamer from Colombo at Yokohama in company with a Japanese friend, and found myself in a maze of police regulations and a murky atmosphere of suspicion that closed around myself as well as the Indian traveller who had stupidly accepted the polite official acknowledgment of his application for a passport as equivalent

to the passport itself. I was passed, with oblique glances, from official to official, after tedious questions at each stage, and finally found it necessary to take the matter to the British Embassy at Tokyo, where the proper officer was dining. He very kindly saw me, and noted the case for attention next day. Next morning I received from a mutual friend of the Embassy and myself a private letter hinting that the less I interested myself in the passport case the better. As it happened, there was no opportunity for further effort on my part, as the steamer had sailed for Shanghai, bearing the Indian homewards: he had not been allowed to land.

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## CHAPTER XV

### ACTIVITIES AND RELAXATIONS

THE advent of the autumn session of the University had showed the sliding door to the Spirits of Silence who had inhabited with me my Japanese room. Before long the Spirit of Simplicity went after them ; and I, who desired nothing so much as silent simplicity for at least twelve months, was left on the door-step of the unattainable, mumbling Meredith's line on Colour—"Of thee to say behold has said adieu," and dragged this way and that by the talons of jabbering demons of complexity. Heretofore the life of Japan had passed before me in a more or less straight line as a disinterested procession. I had not approached it after the manner of the perky journalist. I had let it approach me. A book on it was the farthest thing from my intentions. Now Japan began to look sideways at me ; then to break ranks towards me ; and something within me, more profound, perhaps more wise, than my personal desire for quiet

leisure, was moving towards regions beyond the daily round of exposition of the subtleties of "The moon is up; the stars are bright" to my college students, and the weekly round of literary pugilism with the Georgian poets of London and the free-versers of Chicago and Boston. My attitude to the life around me was no longer spectacular either in appreciation or criticism. Japan began to matter to me. The touch of mutual humanity was on my sleeve, and I awoke one morning to find myself—responsible. A phrase was echoing through my brain with an almost frightening sense of externality and authority: "Better preach the brotherhood of religions than the religion of brotherhood at present: it is the quickest way to both." I had not the slightest personal desire to do either; but I had a feeling that the future was on my track, and that, despite a spell of didactic continence, my besetting sin (*vide* "The Times Literary Supplement" review of "A Preacher-Poet") was at my heels. On October 28 I was overtaken by both. "I think the time is ripe for a synthesis of religions in Japan such as was accomplished a thousand years ago." This was the phrase of destiny in an invitation to an ulterior lunch from an acquaintance high in official circles.

I was to meet several men, Japanese and foreign, who were as interested in the matter as I was assumed to be from certain writings of mine that had passed the customs at Kobé before me.

I accepted the invitation, and in the two days' interval sought to dispel my blank ignorance as to the synthetic religious movement a thousand years ago. This, I gathered, was the coalescence of the indigenous Shintoism with the imported Buddhism—a ritual of communication between the worlds natural and supernatural, with a code of conduct leading beyond both. With these were intermingled the ethics of Confucius and the abstract wisdom of Laotze. But the time for a permanent unification was not then. During the thousand years of what amounted to a Buddhist ascendancy, which was broken by an upsurge of national emotion at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the religious spirit of Japan elaborated Shintoism into thirteen main sects with a number of sub-sects, and Buddhism into twelve main sects and about forty sub-sects. Christianity (like Buddhism) reached Japan from India, about the middle of the sixteenth century, and to-day, with many sectarian divisions, has a membership of less than a quarter of a million in a population

of fifty-six millions to which three-quarters of a million of non-Christians are added every year. Japan may be roughly divided religiously as half Shintoist and half Buddhist.

The after-lunch conversation on November 1 at the residence of my host (within earshot of a military band regaling royal Japanese ears with very unroyal western music) revealed to me the fact that an annual invitation was issued by a Minister of State for a conference on religious unity, and was annually accepted by representatives of all phases of religion save Christianity, whose representatives could not take any action that might be construed as a renunciation of the Christian claim to exclusive and universal efficacy.

Our conference ended as negatively as the official one. No *modus operandi* could be found. But one of the participants (a retired commander of one of the largest Japanese shipping lines) drew me aside and made the confidential announcement that he had been waiting to meet me, as he knew of my coming to Japan, and wanted to join the organisation (of which he knew me to be a member) which had what he believed to be the true attitude towards the religions—an essential unity of spirit, with an equally essential diversity of outward

expression. But before I could help him to fulfil his desire, another strand of the rope of destiny made its appearance.

\* \* \*

I was called on by a dapper young Japanese who was sent to convey to me an invitation from the promoters of a new magazine, "The Asian Review," conducted entirely by Japanese but written in English, to act as literary supervisor. This led to an interview with the editor and the manager, and, on November 4, to a ceremonial dinner to inaugurate the magazine. I was not anxious to add to my work, notwithstanding the lure of substantial remuneration ; but the ideals of the promoters were so high, and their aim of presenting the truest and best elements of Japanese life and thought to the world so necessary for real international understanding, that I felt it my duty to render help at least in the starting of the magazine. I was therefore appointed literary adviser along with Monsieur Paul Richard.

The dinner took place in a beautifully furnished Japanese restaurant in the heart of Tokyo city. In the usual long preliminary wait, the editor and manager and I talked over the programme of the new journal with a growing sense of exaltation. As we calculated, speculated,

romanced, and glowed, the Japan of the bowler hat and French Renaissance architecture receded as if into the past. We moved forward, by a curious inversion, towards the seventh century, when the great influx of spiritual idealism from India through Buddhism awoke the island empire to true being. In the heart of the new Japan secretly lived the flame of the old, the eternally ancient that is ever the veritable modern. It seemed the most natural thing in life for me to be seated on a resiliency Japanese floor, abstractedly turning over glowing junks of charcoal in a *hibachi* with steel chopsticks, and letting the imagination cross high ranges of aspiration and spiritual adventure, as did the fortunate horse that bore the first external symbols of the new faith across the eastern Himalayas to China two centuries before Christ. There was a deep familiarity between myself and the two journalistic crusaders —the saintly man (so like a thousand pictures) in close-cropped hair and flowing beard, with gentle comprehension welling from his eyes across the marches between two languages (for all our talk was through interpretation); and the solid, quiet, round-faced man of business who listened from a distance of a million miles, and at an instant of response was all there like a

lighted candle, and a million miles away a moment after. Other figures in dark *kimono* and white *tabi* silently took their places on *zabuton* around the several *hibachi*; and by the time Monsieur and Madame Richard, and their English companion, Miss Hodson, arrived, the gathering had assumed the aspect of a ritual for the physical incarnation of an already accomplished mental and emotional fact.

We spread ourselves along three sides of the room, each on a cushion with a small lacquered table in front and a *hibachi* at each hand. A group of *geisha* danced and sang in a row across the unoccupied end of the room. When they bowed farewell, a troop of girl attendants began their shuffling procession of eatables that occupied an hour and a half. When the last item had disappeared, the editor told the story of the inception of the magazine—a growing feeling on the part of a group of alert men that ordinary journalism was standing between the outside world and a true understanding of the national aims and methods of Japan; a determination to circumvent the evils arising out of this circumstance; the finding of capital and workers; and the discovery of possibilities of idealistic propaganda not at first visualised. Other speeches in Japanese and English followed.

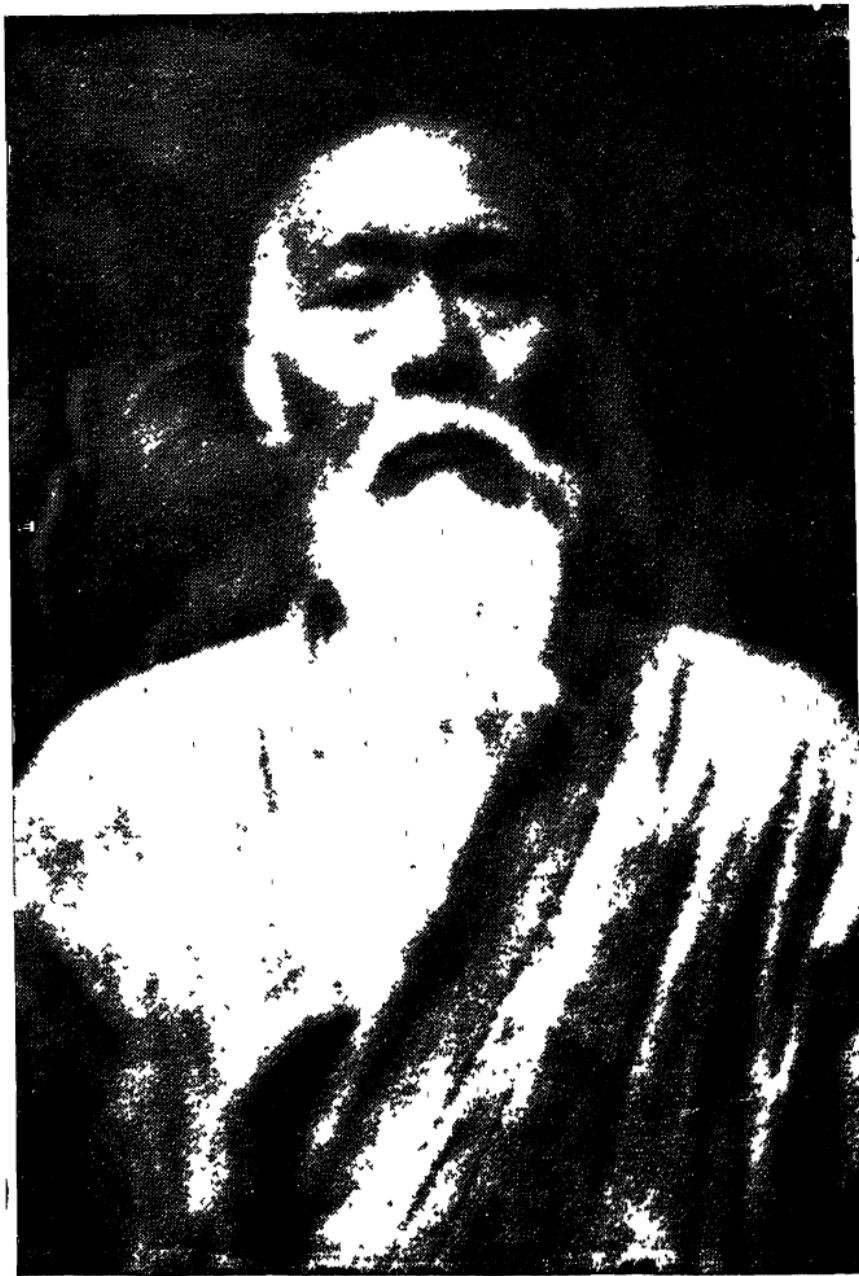
Just before the function concluded, something happened. I felt I wanted some incense sticks more than anything else in earth or heaven, and got them. I asked the editor for the dummy copy of the Review which he had in the capacious sleeve-pocket of his *kimono*. This I set up, along with a photograph of the Indian Yogi-philosopher, Arabindo Ghose, which one of the Japanese had in his pocket, against the flower vase on the *tokonoma* just behind my seat—and when I say "I," only a fraction of the truth is told, for there was a queer sense of enlargement beyond personality, of shadows and echoes in worlds and degrees of which that funny group of squatted and crammed humans was but an echo and a shadow. I handed an incense stick each to seven of the company (why seven I do not know), and asked them to light them from the *hibachi*. Then I got each to set his burning stick in a vase filled with sand, and the seven-fold upcurling smoke of a perfumed offering I placed on the *tokonoma* in front of the dummy magazine. The *tokonoma* became a shrine, and the invisible robes of some hidden Order seemed to fall on me. I stepped back towards the unoccupied end of the room, the girl attendants breaking their group in the middle of the floor

and seating themselves in two rows as easily as in a familiar ceremonial. I dropped on my knees, and with hands palm to palm, spoke the following words as if from a Book as old as Fujiyama :

In the Name of the Supreme Spirit of the Universe, we dedicate "The Asian Review" to the service of Humanity, praying that the ancient ever-living Soul of Japan may use it as an instrument through which She may again incarnate fully in Her people, for the uplifting of the world.

As I rose to my feet, the others automatically did the same. The Indian invocation, *Om*, came resonantly through my lips. Then all together, as one being, cried *Banzai, Banzai, Banzai*, throwing our hands, in the traditional manner, above our heads with each cry.

It took me a considerable time to recall, at the request of the editor, the words of the spontaneous dedication, for translation to those who knew no English, and then it was like calling something across the horizon of the realm of dream. The Japanese version was published throughout the Empire, and the magazine duly appeared. It fell to my lot to express its aims in the Editorial Foreword. For the remaining months of my stay in Japan I fulfilled my duties as adviser.



A JAPANESE PRIEST SOFT-LENS STUDY BY FUCHHEIM—PAGE 285



The studio with the Korean thatched roof and Korean papered walls in which in June I had seen Bernard Leach's exhibition of himself in his various art-crafts, was turned in November into a gallery of William Blake's pictures—in reproduction. This was a hobby of Mr. Yanagi, a young Japanese whose central interest in life was, I learned, the unification of religious thought. His interest in Blake was not wholly æsthetical. The artist's "mysticism" attracted him, and the attraction was a symptom of the wide and sympathetic interest in creative details which belongs to the monistic mind. He might have been (this neat little man, with frizzled hair, in smart European clothes, keen of eye, but sparing in speech) a forgotten waif of the eighth century—the Heian or Kyoto era—in which the persistent Asian tendency towards the unification of essential Deity reduced the Buddha to the level of but one of many manifestations of the Divine Personality, and sent the mind of the age questing for Truth along all paths with equal fervour and assurance. Now once again the protest of the human soul was being voiced against the fallacy of limiting the illimitable Personality to the expression of one Person. The ancient paradox was again seen, that only

in a multitude of "idols" is there safety from idolatry, from the tyranny of a single localisation of the Universal Life.

I was not surprised at thus coming across Mr. Yanagi and his ideals a few days after the unification luncheon party; nor was I surprised when the retired sea-captain turned into the Blake exhibition when I was there, and ultimately brought a three-cornered conversation to one of its points by asking me to come out publicly as a spokesman of the new movement. I had grown accustomed to significant juxtapositions of events in my life, and saw now that things were toward.

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Meanwhile an activity that had taken up a good deal of my time and mental attention outside my professional work was coming to an end. From the beginning of the autumn term I had spent many afternoons and evenings with Madame and Monsieur Richard translating the somewhat fiery epigrams that had first spirted from the volcanic slope of Asamayama. I now knew every yard of the way by street, train, tram or rickshaw from Keio-mae to Shinjuku. I think I could have found my way blindfold (by ear-sight and nose-sight) from the music school in the by-street below the College, where

the passer-by got the full benefit of the simultaneous study of a piano and two fiddles on the ground floor and several vocalists upstairs, each student on his own hook; to the vegetable store at Sendagaya, where the mud was a foot deep, and the giant radish (*daikon*), flagrantly virtuous from its fertiliser-purgation in the refrigerator, shone ivory-white in the electric light like the stacked remnants of battle between armies of Elgin marbles, and smelt as only *daikon* knows how.

On November 16 the first draft of the translation was completed. The question was, What should the book be called? In view of the repairs and extensions which Monsieur Paul Richard had made to the New Testament, I suggested that "The Gospel According to Paul (Richard)" would be fairly correct. "True," he replied, with his smiling blend of subtlety and innocence, "but let us be modest—at least in the title." He had taken as the motto of the book the phrase, "And He made a scourge of small cords"; and "The Scourge of Christ" the book was called.

\* \* \*

The next week-end brought me the relaxation referred to in the preceding chapter with Mr. and Mrs. Eichheim at Kyoto, where the maples

were officially announced as being in the full glory of their autumn tints.

Mr. Eichheim met me at Kyoto station and motored me through the keen frosty morning air to the Miyako Hotel which overlooks the old capital with its background of wooded hills. The day (November 21) turned out to be one of the three wet or snowy days to four of sunshine,

and was given to music and art. The next day, however, was all that could be desired for walking, and the master-fiddler and I explored the hills behind the hotel. The slant sun-rays, striking through the thinning foliage of the woods, drew out the previous day's moisture in steamy streamers from the tree-trunks, as if they



A BRIDGE IN KYOTO

were outlets for the volcanic fires below. We lost our way beautifully in a false choice of alternative paths, but gained thereby some unexpected points of view over the city and country, and an unusual approach to the beautiful temple of Kiyomidzu, which is so perfectly keyed in form and location that one decides (despite mere knowledge) that God shaped and draped the hill-side to fit the temple. Kiyomidzu is not an autumnal show-place. It is just a place of worship. But, aloof though it be in the sober garb of sanctity, the pageant of the season had halted here, splashing the rainbowed waves of evanescent splendour about the feet of the image of the Eternal. The main hall of the temple stands on the edge of a sheer cliff beyond which a large platform is supported on a wooden framework rising from the deep valley below—once a favourite jump-off for those tired of life. Above, below, and around the temple, the trees (pines, maples, cedars and others beyond my woodcraft) had taken on all possible shades of red and yellow in addition to the fundamental browns, greys and greens of stems, branches and normal foliage. The total effect was glorious, but not gaudy. In and about the temple, and along the paths on the hill-side and in the valley, worshippers of Deity

and Nature moved in the garb and gait of Japan. From the top of a flight of steps, set with the infallible eye for the inevitable place,

and near a three-storeyed pagoda, one looked over the once royal and still regal city; and then, without jar or any hint of unfitness, passed citywards by a steep and narrow street packed with the humbler arts and crafts of Japan, among which the preponderance of Kiyomidzu porcelain has given the street the foreign appellation of "Teapot Lane".



A PAGODA

We returned to the hotel by way of Maruyama Park (whose chief glory is in the time of cherry-blossoms) and the great Chionin temple in which priests and a congregation were intoning a Buddhist liturgy in a manner that was at once solemnly discordant and curiously and nobly musical. Hereabout in a side street the child in me found knacky wooden toys (water-wheels, a penny a-piece, so perfectly balanced on their axles that a puff of breath sent them whirling), and miniature clay Noh masks through which the Japanese genius

for art pays left-handed obeisance to Beauty by worshipping Ugliness when it is so supremely ugly that it turns the corner of the beautiful. I chose one of the most beautifully hideous masks out of a box of half a dozen, and paid the ridiculously small sum asked for it. The shopman pressed the others in the box on me so persistently that I almost became annoyed ; but something in him (an ancient man with an ancient wife) was so gentle, and something in the staring, red-visaged devil with the fierce tusks, and in the white-faced mad princess, was so luring, that I decided to take the whole herd—and, on offering more money, discovered that the amount already paid entitled me to the complete set of artistic nightmares.

In the afternoon Mrs. Eichheim and I went by rickshaw to taste the green tea which has never ceased to be stirred into handleless cups since Ashikaga Yoshimasa made the year 1483 immortal by building the first canonical tea-room of four and a half mats in the silver-sanded garden of the Jisho-ji, now called the Ginkaku-ji, vulgarly the Silver Pavilion. Yoshimasa had retired from the arduous and perilous office of *Shogun*, and after building for himself this beautiful home, spent the last decade of his life in the practice of every kind of æsthetic

pleasure, from the training of the nose as a detector of various incenses, to the development of the tea-ceremony as a combination of Buddhist meditation and artistic suggestion. The main building and the Silver Pavilion<sup>1</sup> are beautiful in form and alluring with master-pieces of screen and *kakemono* painting, wood-carving, lacquer-work and pottery. But the stark yet exquisite simplicity of the little tea-room (the shrine of a religion of beauty) held the mind and heart as the symbol of a vanished era. The cup of powdered green tea (not the ordinary leaf tea of social custom) appealed to my then uneducated palate as the bitterest draught I expected to swallow this side of Lethe, but I lived to learn the folly of attaching finality to any phase of taste physical or otherwise. Mrs. Eichheim and I wandered about the miniature garden rejoicing in the reflections of its own civilised trees and of nature's unsophisticated pines on the overhanging hill-side in the still, clear lake in the garden, and crying for the moon to light up the cones of silver sand.

The official special feature of an autumnal week-end in Kyoto came off next morning (November 23) when Mr. Eichheim and I were motored to Takao, the valley of maples, ten

<sup>1</sup> See Frontispiece.

miles north of the city. From an eminence one overlooked a scene of wonderful beauty in the vast masses of withering foliage of the maple forest. One stood on a cliff beneath which an ocean of colour moved magically in permutations of the warm end of the spectrum. From this ocean, tinted waves had surged up the cliff, and clung tenaciously to the last few days of a life that was flaming out in desperate glory. Kiyomidzu had sung the lyric of evanescence: Takao laid out the epic-drama of the passing dynasts.

Thousands of pilgrims (it was a festival day) felt it incumbent upon them to drown the sorrow of the season in *saké*, to judge by the collections of bottles in all stages of emptiness. Temples, tea-houses, cliffs, valleys, stone stairs and leaf-strewn forest paths were variegated with the multi-coloured costumes of Japanese women and children (May the new conspiracy to Europeanise them fail!) and touched mordantly by masculine intermixture of the sartorial dulness of the West.

The more energetic among the maple-viewers indulged in a pastime that was symbolical of the Japanese admiration for a thing well done apart from its utility. This was the game of clay-saucer-throwing, a knacky futility to

everybody but the vendors of the saucers at various points of vantage that gave a clear throw over the maple-tops far below. It was a silly business—but before Eichheim and I quite knew where we were, we were fitted out with a dozen saucers each, and had risen to the heights of the silly Gods who spin worlds along the pathways of space for their daily exercise. I was a fool at the game; but the bow-hand of the famous fiddler caught the trick of the wrist-throw of the saucer, rim downwards, and his reddish disks sailed gracefully over the valley, turned, curved, sloped, soared, and dropped amongst the maples with the cocksureness of a hen-bird on to her hidden nest. The Japanese crowd was naturally interested in the foreign participants in their native game. At Eichheim's beautiful third throw there was a long-drawn *aaaa* . . . of admiration; at the sixth, emotion sought escape in applause; at the immortal twelfth he passed into legend; and I shall not be surprised if, when next I throw clay saucers at Takao, I find a shrine in celebration of the new Discobolus of nineteen-nineteen.

I started back to Tokyo by the afternoon train, and as all vehicles of any capacity were engaged at Takao, I had to go from the hotel

to the station in a rickshaw—a run of forty minutes through the by-ways of the sweet old city among crowds of people who wore the signs of an ancient and kindly culture.

\* \* \*

Then came the carrying through of the Eichheim violin and piano recital in Keio Auditorium, a significant event engineered with the utmost efficiency to a successful conclusion by the students who ran the Wagner



A STREET CORNER IN KYOTO

Society. Here again I saw the intense appreciation and understanding of the best western music, superbly rendered by master artists, which I had previously observed. With excellent social instinct the Wagner Society gave a dinner to the musicians and some special friends after the concert; and later they transmitted through me a substantial donation to the magazine of my College in India—a very graceful act of

recognition from the typical modern Asian country to the ancient Mother of Culture, and a peculiarly gratifying reflection on myself as a link between them.

The Eichheims remained in Tokyo for several weeks. With them and Mr. and Mrs. Byas I saw more of the Japanese drama. One performance of the Noh-dance stands out vividly for its simultaneous revelation to Eichheim and me of the supreme touch of the classical drama, to him musically, to me dramatically. We knew from a synopsis prepared by our host, Professor Togawa, that the closing action of one of the plays was a murder. When the victim ceremonially retired from the stage just as the climax was being approached, I thought something had gone wrong. But our host asked us to watch and listen carefully. The action proceeded as if the man was on the stage, and by some strange magic of suggestion the physically absent person became vividly present in the imagination. When the final sword-thrust came, and the flute gave a single wheep like the cry of a doomed soul, and the drum a single stroke like a last heart-beat, I felt a thrill that no excursions and alarms of the Shakespearean tragedy had ever given me, and

Eichheim seemed to jump from his squat-seat on the box-floor of the little theatre.

“Can you beat that!” said Eichheim. “I’ve gone through the most tremendous working up of orchestral effects, with brass and strings and wood-wind and drums going like the very devil—but nothing ever got me in the nerves like that!”

We were entertained to tea afterwards by the chief actor and his mother—a meeting which led to photographs by Eichheim, and worked towards an exhibition of his soft-lens photography in which the Japanese took a keen interest.

I was taken later by one of my students to a quite different exhibition, a gathering of spontaneous, unguided efforts in drawing and painting by Japanese children. Here one saw the deep, fundamental influence of race-tradition, working free of sophistication through eye and hand, and promising a school of artists a decade hence who will carry forward the true evolution of the pictorial genius of Japan, and bring it back from the left-hand path populated by naked ladies gazing at gold-fish.

\* \* \*

These interests and daily professional activities called out for another short period of

relaxation, preferably in some region of comparative warmth, as winter was upon us in dead earnest, and chills and coughs were abroad. We (that is, the Eichheims and I) selected Atami, on the Idzu peninsula, a short run as miles go (perhaps fifty) from Tokyo, but generations distant in unspoiled nature and humanity. We were warned against taking the sea-coast 'railway,' a thing of string and bamboo, so to speak, that wriggles on shaky props over the edge of the Pacific Ocean, dragged by an engine that looked like the first crude model that George Stephenson threw together before he produced his "Puffing Billy." At Kodzu, therefore, we left the train from Tokyo, and took a fiercely powerful motor-car to cover the twenty miles of "new motor road" (*vide* advertisements) to our destination. We figured ourselves whizzing royally along the margin of land and sea—but it was to be otherwise. It began somewhere beyond the old royal town of Odawara. At a wayside hotel the chauffeur put festoons of chains around the tyres. Soon we knew why. The new "road" changed into a series of pits filled with mud. The car lurched, shook, stopped, bolted forward. At times we hung by the skin of the teeth of our chained wheels over sheer quaky cliffs with the ocean

gazing with greasy-eyed expectancy at us. The fiddler frequently adopted the air of a "positively last appearance," but I cheered him up by offering him a third of the good luck of my horoscope. At one point we came upon a heavy-laden country-cart at an angle of forty-five degrees with one wheel in a hole. In half an hour, all helping, the cart was extracted, big stones were put in the chasm, and we crawled across to the next adventure. At a bend in the road we got a signal to halt from the opposite side of the intervening gulley. A crowd of men were intent on some process. Suddenly they scattered helter-skelter, and in a couple of minutes several jets of smoke and debris went into the air, and were followed by thick-skinned detonations. Workmen were blasting the road. We had to sit another half hour in the car doing the same.

And so on . . . for three solid hours over the twenty most soul-shrivelling miles I ever hope to cover. But at Atami everything was forgotten in the vision of the lovely little town on the blue edge of the Pacific, with the smoke-plume of the volcanic island of Oshima on the horizon, and its background of rolling uplands powdered with snow, beyond which, as we knew from glimpses on the way hither, Fujiyama

was an invisible presence. We put up at the excellently equipped and genially managed Atami Hotel, and after a tramp along the coast road, accompanied by exclamations over colours and contours at every bend of the road, and admiring looks at the graciously antique humanity of the place (not forgetting the workman whose occupation kept him naked to the neck for long spells in the shivering ocean—December 16—and who made occasional landings at a small wood-fire to warm his *hands*) I had my first experience of a bath in a hot-spring. Atami is built around a geyser which erupts about each twelve hours at a temperature of 220 degrees Fahrenheit. From the central reservoir the health-giving mineral water is piped to the hotels and reduced to a bearable heat. Its effects are most refreshing.

The morrow came with clear sunlight and brisk air, and after breakfast we tramped to the Ten Provinces Pass. Our way took us by the beautifully placed Kinomiya Shinto shrine with its ancient giant camphor tree, and up a bridle path which rises to the pass at a height of 2,700 feet in a little over four miles. At sea-level it was balmy, but, by orders, we took a servant who carried our overcoats on a pole across his shoulder. It was warm work during the first



FUJIYAMA



half of the ascent, but when we reached the shrine where one gets the first glimpse of Fuji,



FUJIYAMA FROM ABOVE ATAMI

we were no longer warm, but were thrilling with physical vigour, and enjoying an extraordinary sense of emotional and mental well-being. Somewhere about here we came on the snow—pure, dry, crisp snow such as I had not seen for years—and some distance farther on a little inn, snow-covered, surrounded by chrysanthemums and stone images, and shadowed by gnarled snow-laden pines—the Japan of dreams. Here we found a kindly woman and adequate means of rest and refreshment on our return from the flag-staff on the ridge-top. From this point one has before one a broad expanse of sloping country, beyond which, in the north-west, Fuji rises, snow-clad, lonely, robed in entrancing simplicity and purity, surely the most lovely single natural object in the world. There had

been much conversation in the ascent; now there was silence. Words did not fail us: we did not need them. . . .

Our courage was not equal to the motor drive back to Kodzu next day. One other way of return, besides the coast 'railway,' was by a small steamer, an ancient wooden affair, of no appreciable draught, that seemed to tilt as each passenger stepped on board from the queer flat-nosed barges that took us from the shore innocent of harbourage. The sea was like oiled silk, and of an amazing enamelled blue-green colour, so clear that one could watch shoals of fish moving hither and thither. The morning sun was scorching, the air winy. We were the only foreign passengers among the fifty or sixty on board. We kept close inshore, and had a good look at the bluff coast at any point of which three days before we might have made a tragic paragraph in the newspapers, as has happened to others on the same road since. From the sea it looked innocent enough, with its quaint little towns and picturesque groups of fishing-boats. Just before we got to Kodzu the coast opened out—and there was Fuji again, with a foreground of pine-clad land, smooth water and fishing-craft, an unspeakably beautiful picture. And there is a final picture in my memory of an American

lady and a Scottish one being carried from the landing-barges to the shore at Kodzu pickaback by two almost naked Japanese men who smiled serenely at (I fancy) the new *entente cordiale*, as I did at the reversal of "the white man's burden".

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## CHAPTER XVI

### A JAPANESE WINTER

THE coming of the real winter overlaps the events recounted in the preceding chapter. My diary for November 13 says: "Enter the *hibachi*." Soon, however, two more had to enter, one for the corner of my room opposite *hibachi* number one, another, called *kokatsu*, with a roof on it to act as a foot-rest under my writing-table or as a foot-warmer under my bed-clothes. High-speed sorties with deep breathing had still to be resorted to when, even with all available heat, fingers refused to get an impression out of the typewriter. Later, when the mercury touched 24 F. and the external world had gone dumb under the muffling of several inches of snow, to the delight of the artist, my preparation for the day's work and my retirement for the night took on the guise of a polar expedition in the amazing collection of garments that I had to don and the assemblage of bed-clothes that I had to get between.

I was not alone in this robing for the season's ritual. The Japanese people donned several layers of *kimono* for day-wear, and thus must have added appreciably to the congestion 'of



"THE DELIGHT OF THE ARTIST"

the population. In Shiba Park tall trees had been carefully packed in straw casings. The solitary pine-trees that did their best to flourish in the side streets of Tokyo had been given the support of a spinal pole from which ropes radiated to the branches to help them to bear the coming snow. My fish-pond had been covered with thick straw matting which kept the snow some inches above the surface of the water but did not prevent it from freezing iron-hard. (I felt

some pangs for the smothered and frozen fish, especially for the family of little new ones, and projected a farewell dirge lamenting the wastage of young happy life. But other matters interfered—which was just as well, for when the ice melted in early spring, the whole shoal was alive and kicking, and the youngsters had grown big enough to give impudence to their parents.)

\* \* \*

On Christmas Eve I had all the symptoms of influenza and a few peculiarly my own. That night I slept with the *kokatsu* in my bed, and a small tin *hibachi*, that burned a charcoal sausage, at my solar plexus. I awoke next morning with anything but a Merry Christmas feeling, but by dint of special hygienic exertions (including the use of my precious piece of red flannel that had passed the customs at Kobé) I managed to get rid of the fever next day, and started in the afternoon for Yokosuka, the great naval station, as a preliminary to the winter vacation. The glimpses of concealed power and menace in ugly smoking war-craft (the lamentable passport of the new Japan into the conclave of Great Powers, rather than her exquisite art and gracious culture) gave one a painful realisation of what had been, and might be. The shops of

the busy town were dressed for New Year. The streets were swarming with humanity, especially sturdy children. Groups of these played sailor and soldier games, marching with the symbols and signs of braggart militarism—an evil tendency which the Education Department of Japan has (1922) valiantly tried to defeat by eliminating pugnacious passages from certain school text-books.

I was escorted (on foot at my request) by young Mr. Arrow-head to his parental home, a beautiful house beautifully situated on one of the numerous little hills around the coast. Madame Arrow-head, his mother, wife of one of the most exalted officers in connection with the defences of the Imperial capital, was in the garden wagging to left and right on her back the dangling head of a sleeping baby—a refugee from a domestic catastrophe in a related home. The General had just returned from duty to receive me and would be ready in a few minutes. In my Chamber of Images, Section of Anticipation, I think I must have set my host as a fierce, truculent,



SAMURAI AND SWORD

sword-waving, yellow-peril kind of monster, judging by the shock which I received when he



MILITARISM IN MUFTI

greeted me in the guest-room kneeling in *kimono* on a silken cushion and bowing to the *tatami* half a dozen times—a small, stoutish, somewhat rubicund man with a gentle cheery smile and mystical eyes, a chief of *samurai*, of

the Zen, or contemplative, sect of Buddhism. The General was reinforced in his reception of me by the whole family on the floor—Mrs. Arrow-head, an earnest Protestant; Miss Arrow-head, a devout Catholic; young Mr. Arrow-head, an indulgent but not superior Agnostic; the General's mother, aged 78, full of brains and grace (and later of physical power in pulling the *amado*, or rain-doors, into their places at sunset); and the orphan baby.

After dinner I was told (through the interpretation of my student friend, who alone knew any English) that I was to regard myself as a member of the family, and take any share I desired in the social amenities of the evening, which would be just as usual. These consisted to two card games, one the matching of monthly flowers, the other the matching

of the two parts of a series of poems—quiet, cultured pastime, peculiarly Japanese. My share was spectatorial, particularly as the mothering department had detected a cough that had developed, and insisted on my inhaling for hours the fumes of some patent affair that they abstracted from the domestic paraphernalia.

Next day young Mr. Arrow-head took me for a tramp among the villages, where country preparations for New Year were in progress. Groups of villagers pounded rice for ceremonial cakes in big buckets, as many as five swinging wooden mallets in succession around one bucket in perfect order.

\* \* \*

That evening I went across to Kamakura, and took up my vacation residence as a guest in the home of Mr. Little Lake which I had visited with The Young Party in June. Here I lived the pure Japanese life for the next fortnight (with Europeanised intervals to visit western acquaintances in the chief hotel), feeding *en famille* and occupying a lovely little room on the upper storey overlooking the small garden with its perpetually flowering rose-bush and boundary of pine plantation. Nature was in a crystalline and sunshiny mood, with

occasional sharp relapses to wind and rain, when the small holes and cracks in the *shoji*-paper became festive like the children, and squeaked and bugled gloriously to the amazing bass of the Pacific Ocean. And there was one excellent earthquake that I clearly anticipated by half a minute, awaking from my beauty sleep with an intense longing for a nice throbby earthquake, and getting it—a colossal kick and a long drawn dog-shake... Excursions were not frequent, as I was bent on repose. Still, I had to make a round of the temples and watch the children give a bath of the purest and coolest water to the image of the gentle Deity, Jizo; perform the pilgrimage across the centipede-like bridge to Enoshima island; see the *Dai Butsu* (Great Buddha) in moonlight, a thrillingly impressive vision of calm purity; and take a drive in a country vehicle, the *enterobasho*, nicknamed by foreigners (not without reason) the "basher," from which, gracefully and without regret, I retired a mile on the Dzushi side of the royal palace at Hayama to make way for a couple of ladies backed with babies—and added another to my collection of memories of queer methods of transport, which began (age one) with a potato-basket in an Irish farm-house, and

progressed through the perpendicular jolt of a grumpy camel in the desert of Sind, and the slow churn of a ponderous elephant in the Mysore jungle.

One unscheduled excursion in this vacation froze itself into my memory. I found myself compelled to spend a day in Tokyo renewing certain details of winter clothing, and saying good-bye to the Eichheims who were going to China. The evening train by which I returned to Kamakura was held up not far from Tokyo through a fatal derailment on a parallel line. There was a heavy white frost, and as the electric heating apparatus died down, the cold crept upwards from one's feet with appalling inevitability during the four hours of delay, until one's consciousness was driven into some remote corner of one's head, and nothing seemed so certain as that the immortal soul was a fragment of a cosmic iceberg, and fire and brimstone no Hell, but a delectable consummation devoutly to be wished. In such circumstances one understood the place of volcanoes in a properly balanced universe, and appreciated the energy involved in the Japanese student's definition of them as "mountains that rupture themselves".

The preparations for New Year, which I had first seen at Yokosuka, rapidly became more elaborate, and ultimately took the form of street festoons of rice-straw and upright branches of pine, fundamental symbols of prosperity internal and external. There was much activity among the people, for it is a time of special social intercourse, account squaring and wishes for good fortune. I tested my own fortune on December 31 at a shrine to a popular nature-spirit on a cliff overlooking a prospect of pine-clad hills and sea. I did not test it by the Japanese method of chewing a piece of paper and throwing it at a wooden statue of a Deity in the hope that it might stick for luck. I paid a small fee, shook a dice-box, and received a paper in Japanese, which, being interpreted, said: "If you wait on your sweetheart, she will come." A hit, a palpable hit! for the future had been tapping on my door with, as usual (Gemini rising), a double knock. News from my College in India hinted a possible recall, but at the moment the likeliest thing was the coming to Japan of the person pointed at by the finger of Fate.

My Christmas chill had not been quite broken, so I devoted my New Year's Eve to a curative Japanese bath. The water was somewhere

about 300 F. in the shade, and incapable of reduction, as the stove (inserted in the side of the bath) was red-hot, and a deluge, let alone a few buckets of cold water, would not reduce the bath even to boiling point. By the time I had inserted myself gingerly in the perpendicular tub I was in the agonies (and of the colour) of a boiling lobster from the waist down, and freezing from the waist up. I beat a hasty retreat, rubbed myself fiercely above and very very gently below, and retired to my little upstairs room in a complicated mood. From a dream of freezing on the hob of limbo, and being transported to roast on an iceberg, I was awakened at midnight by the temple bells. Each bell had to give a hundred strokes; and as some of the big bells have to allow an interval of about a minute between each stroke (awaiting the cessation of the previous vibration) some of them were still informing all concerned that it was twelve o'clock at one-thirty.

\* \* \*

Next day, the first of nineteen-twenty, the year of the monkey, I had full share of the ceremonial dainties; and on the day following I was initiated into the tea-ceremony along with a few chosen friends of East and

West. Our small dining-room was reorganised as near as possible to the canon of tradition, swept clean as a new pin and decorated with a single flower in a simple vase. The participants squatted along the wall on the *tatami*. The celebrant was Miss Arrow-head, who brought the proper outfit of *hibachi*, kettle, ladle, bowl, whisk, handkerchief, etc., from Yokosuka. She herself was adorned with wonderfully beautiful and artistic sobriety for



THE JAPANESE TEA-CEREMONY

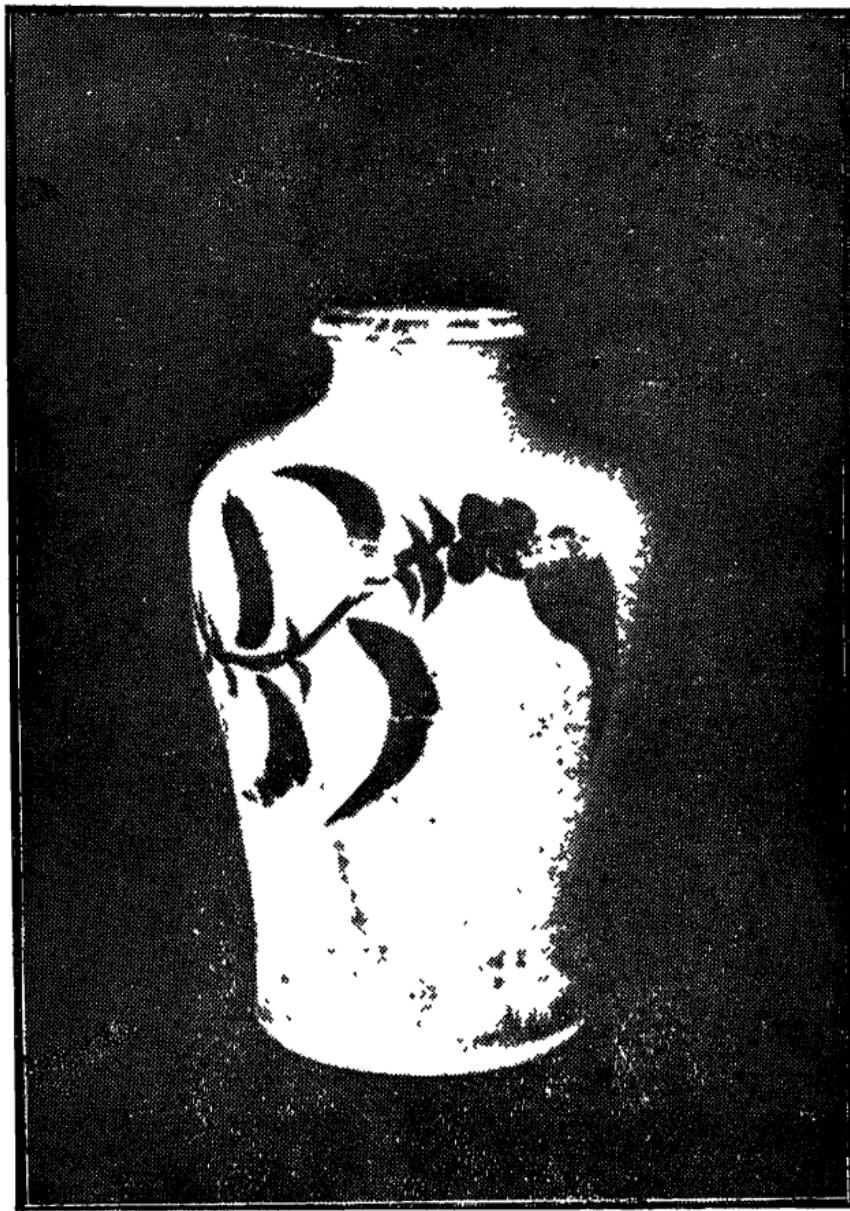
the occasion, and with perfect grace and repose went through the ritual of boiling the water, whisking the powdered tea in the common drinking-bowl, handing it to each guest in turn,

cleaning it for the next, and ultimately leaving the paraphernalia just as it was before the ceremony began. Miss Arrow-head was a Catholic, and in apology for her failing to keep an appointment, her brother (falling into foreign idiom and orthography out of respect for his Professor) wrote, "My sister is making a messe in the chapel," (meaning she was performing a mass)—but she made no messe of the tea-ceremony.

One day I got a look into Japanese psychology that furnished me with a useful offset to the stories of Japanese commercial astuteness that I had first heard in Kobé, and that had, unfortunately, been followed in my own experience in the purchase of articles that were not what they professed to be. In a moment of abstraction I had left my pocket-book, containing four hundred yen, on the counter of the Kaihin Hotel office, and gone into the garden to talk with friends. When I discovered what I had done, sufficient time had elapsed for the purse to be made away with beyond recovery. To my great relief, and illumination, it was handed over to me intact on my describing it to the miniature small-boy in buttons who was the only person in attendance when I returned to the office counter to enquire. This has been the

experience of many visitors. Whatever delinquencies the fundamental dishonesty of modern commercialism may have brought to Japan, she is honest at heart. Her people as a whole are industrious. Industry (not necessarily industrialism) makes for the creation and sharing of substance and for self-respect. In my ten months in Japan I met two beggars—one a poor villager, the other a blind nun.

Beneath these upper currents of my winter vacation, there was a deep under-current of warm friendship with certain of my students and their friends, with whom I had many long talks on ideals in literature. External reserve was, I found, but the mask on a fiery passionate-ness of spirit. There was something eerie in the realisation that the gentle young poet of the childlike smile and the delicate sensitive hand had wrapped up in his consciousness the following passionate fragment of biography. From a very early age he had been the devoted admirer of a beautiful girl who was as devotedly an admirer of him. Her beauty and vivacity brought many rival suitors as she grew up, but she kept true to her poet. One night three rivals way-laid him by the bank of a river with intent to get rid of him, but his father had insisted on his going in for the full rigorous training of a son



AN INDO-JAPO-CHINESE VASE BY GURCHARN SINGH—PAGE 322



of a *samurai*, and with his *ju-jutsu* he flung off his attackers and fled. This incident opened the girl's eyes to the danger that surrounded her fiancé. She determined to save him from it—and committed suicide. After the manner of Japanese chivalry, three of her suitors severally decided that she should not go alone to the world of spirits, and followed her.

\* \* \*

On January 10 I left the kindly and quiet country, and ran straight into metropolitan life in the shape of the birthday celebration of the founder of Keio University, an epidemic of influenza, professional routine, a new series of public University Lectures, and a wild gallop of the horses of destiny towards ends and beginnings.

Yukichi Fukuzawa, son of a *samurai*, was born in 1835; became the first Japanese student of the West through the medium of English; visited America in 1859 (see Whitman's "Broadway Pageant") under the auspices of the Tokugawa *shogunate* then in power (represented to-day by Prince Tokugawa, a man of striking ability); later visited Europe twice, and America again, and as the result of his travels



PRINCE TOKUGAWA

published Japanese translations of many English books. In 1856 he had founded on modern methods a free school (Keio-gi-juku) which he ultimately raised to university rank. As an outlet and a control for the mental power thus generated, he founded a daily newspaper, the "Jiji Shimpo," (sometimes referred to, because of its balance and independence, as the "Times" of Japan), and a social club called the Kojunsha. He stood for representative government in the days of feudalism, and was the first champion of the rights of women. He died in 1901. Such was the man whose anniversary celebration I stumbled upon in the great auditorium on my return from my winter vacation. Naturally I attended it to pay respect to the memory of greatness and the living principle which he has transmitted to all time in his Moral Code whose essence is expressed in the motto of Keio—"Self-respect and Independence". The University itself followed its own motto, and was independent of state control and practically self-supporting. But this does not carry any anti-government imputation, such as haunts independent educational activity in British India, where official education was imposed as a nourisher of foreign domination, and is still weighted against the indigenous culture. On the contrary,

President Kamada of Keio was sent to the Labour Conference at Washington as representative of the Government of Japan, and later was made Minister of Education . . . Mr. Fukuzawa lived to see his educational aims carried forward. His work was given Royal sanction and national scope by the Imperial Rescript of 1872, which declared the wish of the Throne that "henceforward education shall be so diffused that there may not be a village with an ignorant family, or a family with an ignorant member". Keio University was followed by others. In the year in which Fukuzawa died, a Women's College was opened. There are now five State Universities, and half a dozen independent Universities; and these are not, as they are in India, foreign pinnacles over a foundation of general illiteracy, but the highest national expression of an organisation (primary, secondary, normal, technical, commercial, cultural) which is open from the smallest village upward. The system is not yet complete, but it is rapidly being improved, and, as it stands, it is a marvellous production of a history of little more than half a century. . . Mr. Fukuzawa's political ideals have also been advanced from the very rudimentary democratic beginnings at the passing of feudalism in 1868. In

1890 the representative system was introduced. A House of Representatives was elected on a male property franchise (reduced in 1921 but not sufficiently to stem the growing demand for universal adult male suffrage, along with which is growing the demand for women's franchise). A House of Peers was constituted, both hereditary and elective. A party system has arisen, based, however, not on groups of principles, such as Conservative or Liberal, but on policies declared by men of eminence and personality. A small group of Elder Statesmen, who stand between the Diet and the Crown, are coming to be regarded as an anachronism. The prerogatives of the Emperor are practically those of a constitutional monarch. . . . The birthday celebration was, of course, in Japanese, but I was helped into intelligent participation by a friendly translator. Happily no such aid was needed at the refreshment tables; the curse of separation pronounced at the Tower of Babel went no further down than the tongues of men. I observed with considerable regret that I was the sole foreign member of the staff present.

\* \* \*

College routine was now considerably interfered with by influenza which had come from

rapid changes of temperature and variations of rain and snow. Thousands were dying. Every time I went into the street I had to make way for a funeral. One day I saw a Buddhist funeral and a Shinto one crossing each other's path. In the front of the Buddhist funeral two men carried paper lanterns—as symbols, for it was day-time. Then two men carried huge artificial flowers—symbols also, for they were not an imitation of any ordinary flower, but white-and-gold lily-shaped things on long stems, pointing perhaps to the sacred lotus. Behind these followed, in rickshaws, a yellow-robed priest, and the chief mourner; next a shrine of white wood, like a small temple, bearing the ashes; lastly a procession of rickshaws carrying the mourners. The Shinto funeral consisted of a black shrine-shaped carrier slung on a shoulder-pole, accompanied by a few mourners on foot. Each was utterly different externally; and both were in some inner way typically Japanese, the one in its æsthetical accompaniments, the other in the reduction of externals, as befits a medium of communication between the worlds celestial and terrestrial, not excluding the souls of slaughtered fowl to which a special memorial ceremony is devoted.

A couple of diversions from the daily routine of preparation and lectures came to relieve the gloom of winter and epidemic. One was a concert of Japanese music on Japanese instruments. My escort could not put me in rapport with the music, as he was a modern, but it appeared to be exceedingly monotonous. It was in the tradition of the Noh-dance and the tea-ceremony, but lacked their special touch. I am prepared still to like it if and when I hear it again; but I could understand (if I could not fully accept) the opinion of my Japanese friend that such music was not only funeral to the ear but dead to inspiration. Japan is in her era of Elizabethan romance and must have her fling in warmth and variety. The other diversion was a lantern lecture by me on India, at the Peers' School, to the young nobility of Japan—a crowd of boys not yet at Big Five dignity, happy and free, but well-mannered and attentive when there was need. At the close I had tea with the staff. Three young princes of the blood royal had tea at a separate table. They were alert, but quiet, the youngest destined to be abbot of the shrine of the Divine Ancestress, the Sun Goddess, at Isé.

\* \* \*

My second series of weekly public lectures in the University auditorium began on January 29

The first of the series was indicative of what was happening behind the curtain of exterior life. Just before the vacation I had overheard among some members of the University authority at lunch a conversation which I judged (from the little Japanese I had absorbed) to be on the subject of the lack of the religious spirit in Japanese education. One of the officials declared (on my expressing an interest) that it was the worst flaw in the system, but that he felt it was impossible to solve the problem with so many religious divergencies. I told him it had been solved in my College in India, where Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muhammadans united daily in dedication of their work to the Supreme Being, each according to the idiom of his own faith. Whereupon I was asked to take as the subject of my first public lecture of the new series, "Religion in Education," and to set out the value of the religious impulse, and show how a unified effort might be made without offending sectarian sensibilities. I began to think the day of unification was at hand—but it was not. The lecture was a total failure as far as its ostensible purpose was concerned. Contrary to the experience of the former lectures, only a handful of students turned up. My invitation to any who

wished to follow the matter up drew not one response. But there were sequelæ not anticipated by those who asked for the lecture or by myself. Two American ladies, a Greek lady, two Indian young men and a young Korean spoke to me at the end of the lecture. Thereafter ensued much interchange of thought on the deeper problems of life, and private meetings whose members appeared powdered from head to foot with snow, but with the red cheek of physical exhilaration and the bright eye of inner enthusiasm. On a night when a heavy fall had put street traffic out of action, I tramped two miles out and two back to a semi-public meeting, and had to give an address in a friend's nether garments while my own were drying for the return journey. Ultimately on February 14, at the request of the growing circle of comrades in quest of Truth, I gave a public lecture in the city, at the close of which I was authorised to cable for the charter of the first Lodge of The Theosophical Society in Japan.

\* \* \*

The symptoms of a possible recall to India grew stronger in my mail just at this time; and as a preliminary I made inquiries as to possible passages to India. None could be found until nine months hence! At the

same time the Richards felt the call of India, and found a steamer by which they could get to Colombo. There was also a berth for me, which I determined to take, and we were full of anticipation of a stimulating journey together. The very night that I returned to the College after authorising them to book the berth for me, I received a cable saying that my wife was coming to Japan in May. Inquiries now took a different turn—a home, activities for her, and the adjustment of my time-table accordingly. But on March 5 I finally received a cable from the executive of my College in India calling me back. It was now too late to go with the Richards; but by some curious kink in the rope of destiny I found a berth practically asking for me next day; and by some other curious interlinking of the strands of the same rope, I passed the Eichheims in Shanghai river and arrived in Colombo harbour simultaneously with the Richards.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### “ENDS AND BEGINNINGS”

FROM the date of my recall to my departure, my life was a personal epitome of a year's Japanese climate. Volcanic eruption and earthquake, as a preliminary to packing, sported among my belongings, which had assumed proportions and a variety that gave me a pang of sympathy for the bewilderment in store for the customs authorities in India. The annual Girls' Festival had added considerably to my collection of things Japanese—toy screens, miniature plants and furniture, masked dancers, and the Emperor and Empress (no less) dressed in their imperial best. There were also precious evidences of the weakness of man and the temptingness of the street stalls of Tokyo, which plant irresistibilities of handicraft on the democratic kerbstone under the electric light, when Capital has closed its doors for the day and taken flight from the topsy-turvy metropolis whose suburbs are in its centre and whose slums are in its suburbs.

Snow swirled about me from the disappointment of the University authorities and of friends who had built castles on the foundation of my staying; but it was melted by the sunshine of great dreams in these and others, dreams whose telling is not for these pages, seeing that their fulfilment belongs to the book of the Japan-to-Be. Cyclonic vortices carried me hither and thither from farewell to farewell—and expended themselves in the deep calm of spiritual inaugurations. All the doors of my being swung both ways; inwards before the exquisite tangibilities of an affection that I had been perhaps too modest, or more likely too blind, to realise; outward at the call of disinterested service to one's human kindred, than which there are few more blessed experiences, the more so when the service is of inner to inner, and the light of the spirit turns the normally opaque walls of racial difference into transparencies of celestial design and colour.

\* \* \*

My withdrawal was characteristically two-sided. On one side it was international with Japan as one of eight countries spiritually united in the search for Eternal Truth. On the other side it was wholly Japanese with poetry as its link; æsthetical, with a golden touch of

the inner light which it had been my happy lot to carry along the edge of Asia from the Mother of Illumination. My own students entertained me in a Tokyo restaurant, not now as their *sensei*, but as a fellow writer. They and a wider circle spent a happy evening with me in the home of a patron of the arts, when my reputation was exalted by the insistence of a black cat on occupying my knees when the camera men of the lynx-eyed press tracked us out.

But the incident out of an efflorescence of kindness that comes to me with the aroma of exquisite romance, was a call from two Japanese girl students who, as they informed me with white frankness in good English, were lovers of my poetry, and therefore lovers of its author. Happily they brought no carved or lacquered symbol of their kindness to complicate the last terrors of packing. They had come simply to recite to me two short poems of my own which they had seen in the monthly journal of The Young Party. There was no ceremonial space on the *tatami* of my room, and we had to sit on corded boxes. When we had exchanged views on poets and poetry, one of them, a bright creature of beautiful spirit, stood up and made her offering, in perfect expression, with a voice

like a temple bell sounding out of the Fujiwara era a thousand years ago—when the influence of woman was dominant in art and life, but failed, not because of the femininity of women, but because of the imperfect manliness of men. The realisation spontaneously given to me in the pure æsthetical tribute of that free-souled Japanese girl, that in her I had reached the true Japan, was indeed a great gift, not of farewell, but of a spiritual meeting of Japan and myself behind the veils of life.

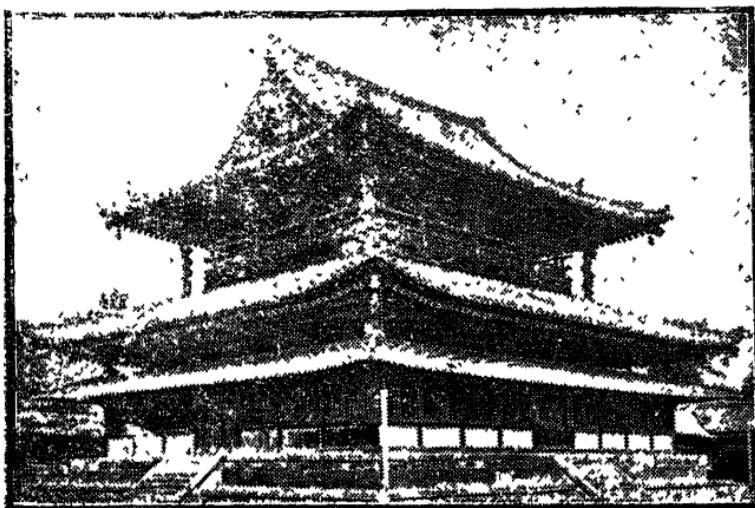
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I left Tokyo for Kyoto and Kobé on March 21. The entire staff of the club, who had been more friends than servants to me, came with me from the College to the railway station, each, as a last service, carrying one of a pile of articles that cold-weather travelling required. At Tokyo station there was a crowd of friends who summarised my various contacts with the cosmopolitanism of the capital of Japan.

At Kyoto I was met by Gurcharn Singh, one of a group of Indians who had come close to me in the last couple of months of my stay—a young Panjabi Sikh, tall, straight, bearded and turbanned (but in European clothes), who was studying Japanese handicrafts for the future helping of his own people, and had learned to

speak glib Japanese in an incredibly short time. Through him I was received as a guest in the home of a Japanese teacher of English, and with him (after a day's foraging in the by-streets of Kyoto for my last consignment of artistic nick-nacks), I went in quest of the fountain-head of Japanese culture—the temple of Horiyuji beyond Nara where to-day, fourteen centuries after the event, one may look on the very lines and colours through which the religious and artistic idealism of India entered the blood-stream of Japanese civilisation. Hereabouts (though no one could tell me where) had lived the first great figure in Japanese Buddhism, Prince Wumayado (otherwise named Shotoku-Taishi, the Saint-Prince) who, at the beginning of the seventh century, made the first step towards the still unaccomplished unification of the creeds and philosophies, by blending the precise ethic of Confucianism with the aspiration and warmth of Buddhism ; wrote a masterly commentary on the Chinese rendering of the Indian *sutras* ; and is to-day given Deific honours as the ancestral Patron of the Arts. Happily, however, the contemporary temple of Horiyuji still stands, and beckons the seeker of the holy place of the double marriage of Indian and Japanese religion and art, across the fields with its uplifted pagoda-finger.

Twilight was not far away when we reached the temple, and we had to satisfy ourselves



THE GOLDEN HALL, HORIYUJI

with a mere glance at all but the *kondo* (Golden Hall); for here, in addition to many heart-stirring relics of the craftsmanship of Japan's first great discovery of herself, were the identical frescoes which, in the seventh century, (through Korean hands trained by masters of the spirit and manner of the priest-artists of the rock-temples of Ajanta in India) had breathed into Japanese art the breath of immortality. The frescoes were covered from cold and damp by tight-fitting hangings of plain white cloth. My Indian escort, in voluble Japanese, set out

to the caretaker all the reasons why the cloths should be removed for us; but the most he would do was to let us, as long and as often as we liked, peep in by the sides of the cloths. It

was enough; for those pure and noble adumbrations of the Divine Personality, conceived in supreme reverence and created with supreme art, passed to the centre of one's being in a look.

From its beginnings at Horiyuji, Japanese art passed on into the Nara era (A.D. 700 to 800) which blended,



A HORIYUJI FRESCO

as Okakura points out, the abstract beauty of the Indian model with the strength of the Tang era in China, and to these added a delicacy and completeness that was later to establish itself as the special mark of Japan. Of the remains of this era we had been impressed in the forenoon by the colossal Buddha, the world's largest statue of cast bronze, and had admired the elaborate temples and great pagoda, and we were not sorry that it was dark when

we passed through Nara on our way back to Kyoto, so that we could carry to our dreams the memory of the *kondo* undisturbed by history.

\* \* \*

We started next morning for Kobé. The efficiency of the Japanese press brought to the railway station at Osaka ("the Birmingham of Japan"—and proud of it) two leaders of modern Japanese journalism, one of whom came on to Kobé with Singh and me, and made my last hours gratefully memorable by taking me to the home of a friend whose wife entertained us with bright conversation, music on various Japanese instruments, and ceremonial tea. My baggage had been shipped with no trouble, and I slept on board the steamer.

Early next morning the dignified young Indian came on board. Also came the Japanese editor and his fiancée. To my surprise one of my students turned up, the son of a member of the Japanese Diet. He had come from Tokyo to get a last look at his *sensei* and to take his photograph. But he did not get him alone. The wanderer after a dream of human unity had, in the hour of his going thence, set up a vortex of friendliness into which were drawn some significant constituents of the

future international comradeship—the India of the ages, the Japan of to-day, the “Island of Destiny,” and the emancipated womanhood without which all else is vain.



INTERNATIONAL COMRADESHIP

At noon the “Kaga Maru” hauled out from the quay. The Japanese bowed, the men with hats removed. The tall Indian put his farewell into the palm-to-palm salutation of his race. When the crowd on the quay had become a human blur, and my little group was lost among it, I could still see, above the dark turban, the hands of blessing, hands that were destined to mould a thing of beauty, symbolising the cultural unity of Asia, in the shape of a vase, Chinese in model, Japanese in substance, Indian in craftsmanship.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See picture facing p. 304.

The day was clear and sunny, but as our way took us along the middle of the Inland Sea we saw little of its coastal beauties save glimpses of hills. Here and there junks with high poops and dark ribbed sails made pretty pictures.

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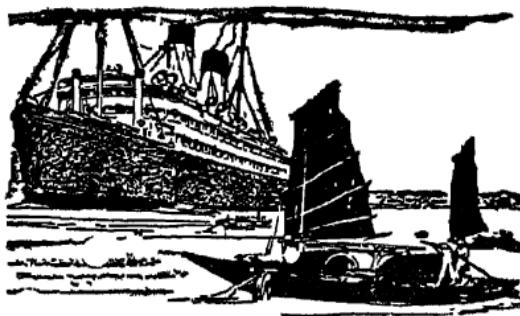
We reached Moji, a coaling port at the western entrance to the Inland Sea, at seven o'clock next morning, and lay in the harbour till the following noon in a racket of steam-winches and the gloom of a wet and windy night and day. Ten months previously (it seemed ten years under the accumulation of memory), I had passed from one civilisation to another. Now I was to carry the civilisation of my year of exile right to the gate of India, for my steamer was Japanese from keel to truck, from bow to stern, from commander to cadet, on deck and below deck.

It was strange to weirdness to pace the deck in the darkness and feel imaginatively the life that lay beyond the curtain of sight, in which my own had merged so familiarly. Fragments from the procession of events crossed the eye in the disorderly chronology of memory touched with emotion. . . . By and by there came a hush in the head as the young moon, somewhere among the folds of the rain curtains, softened the

darkness with silver. Details fell away. I knew only that life was moving on—I wondered whither. Out there was a great Being ; Great Japan (*Dai Nippon*) it called itself in moments of relapse from its true greatness to the borrowed braggadocio of wealth and power that is foreign to the gentle and simple East. Yet in that Being was also the power of great renunciation and the wealth of a tradition of taste. These things, I felt, were fundamental. The others would pass. True, her art (aesthetically and technically incomparable, and the central characteristic of her civilisation), passing epochally from Horiyuji and Nara to Kyoto (800-900) and through the eras of Fujiwara (900-1200), Kamakura (1200-1400), Ashikaga (1400-1600), Tokugawa (1600 to 1850), developed away from its early spiritual inspiration to become the gaudy mirror of the courtesan and an arabesque of the world that is open only to the eye. True, a book of selected masterpieces of Japanese painting begins in the seventh century with sacred figures on a shrine at Horiyuji and ends in 1838 with peacocks. But the end was not then and is not yet. From the peacock stage, Japanese art and life passed on to the era of westernisation. But the artistic consciousness of Japan may reassert itself, as

the national consciousness passes beyond the external threat of the last half century, and her authentic soul create fresh images of itself. What those images may be, some of us who love her veritable Self dare hope to the edge of prophecy of which her own genius is the oracle. Is not Chou Mao-Hsu, a general of the eleventh century, remembered, not for his military prowess, but for his essay explaining his preference for the lotus above all the other flowers of the earth. Chou Mao-Hsu was a Chinese; but it was Kano Masunobu, leader of a school of Japanese artists four hundred years after Chou had become “a guest of Heaven,” who immortalised the lotus-worshipper in a painting that is a signed and sealed declaration to the new Japan of the measure that the fundamental Japan applies to the world and the things thereof. In the fulness of her expanding life she will touch all its phases; but those who love her will pray that she may bind herself to none but “the things that are more excellent,” and that, by being truly herself, she may teach the world to raise the common things of life to the level of art, even as she herself has made art a necessity of life.

We left Japan in wind and rain and struggling sunlight at noon on the twenty-eighth of March, 1920, just in time to be too soon for the cherry blossoms.



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